

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Agenda

Wednesday, 9 December 2020
1.00 pm

Online via Zoom

To: Members of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

9 December 2020

There will be a meeting of the Culture, Tourism & Sport Board at **1.00 pm on Wednesday, 9 December 2020** online via Zoom.

Political Group meetings:

The group meetings will take place in advance of the meeting. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: Labgp@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

LGA Contact:

Jonathan Bryant
07464652746 / jonathan.bryant@local.gov.uk

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Social Media

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

The twitter hashtag for this meeting is #lgacts

Culture, Tourism & Sport Board – Membership 2020/2021

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Peter Golds (Deputy Chairman)	Tower Hamlets Council
Derek Bastiman	Scarborough Borough Council
Matthew Lee	South Kesteven District Council
Cath Homer	Northumberland Council
Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
Phil Seeva	Cornwall Council
Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
Substitutes	
David Jeffels	North Yorkshire County Council
Colin Morgan	Daventry District Council
Karen Rampton	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
Labour (7)	
Clare Coghill (Deputy Chair)	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Peter Kelly	Preston City Council
Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
Muhammed Butt	Brent Council
Dhanisha Patel	Bridgend County Borough Council
Jane Black	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Substitutes	
Guy Nicholson	Hackney London Borough Council
Danny Myers	City of York Council
Jacqueline Burnett	Luton Borough Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Chair)	Portsmouth City Council
Chris White	Hertfordshire County Council
Substitutes	
Chris Hogg	South Lakeland District Council
Independent (2)	
Julian German (Vice-Chair)	Cornwall Council
Tom Hollis	Ashfield District Council
Substitutes	
Natalie McVey	Malvern Hills District Council

Agenda

Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

Wednesday 9 December 2020

1.00 pm

Online via Zoom

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Kevin Mills, Sport England, and James Wurr, Department for Culture, Media & Sport, to attend.	
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Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 20 January 2021, 1.00 pm, via Zoom

Note of last Culture, Tourism & Sport Board meeting

Title: Culture, Tourism & Sport Board
Date: Wednesday 23 September 2020
Venue: Zoom

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, declarations of interest and apologies

The chair welcomed members to the first board meeting of 2020/21.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

Members agreed the minutes from Friday 12 June 2020

3 UK Theatre

Julian Bird, CEO of UK Theatre gave a presentation on the working group with Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the arts sector. Julian Bird highlighted the impact the Culture Recovery Fund will have on the sector.

Members made the following comments:

- Concerns that venue funding will go to bigger venues in urban areas, particularly London. The risk is cultural deserts if venues in more rural areas are ignored and forced to close. Many authorities use venues like theatres as community spaces that have a greater impact than what the venue would suggest.
- Best practice within local government of how theatres have stayed open will be helpful going forward.
- Local government has already been very practical on the diversity of culture they have put out during the pandemic for residents in these difficult times.
- There has been a lack of local government input on where the funding will be going, which has been frustrating for members.
- The myth that London tourism is hardest hit needs to stop, all the economic studies show coastal economies have been hardest hit and support is greatly needed.
- Business tourism like conferences have seen a major decline since the pandemic started. Many local economies are reliant on business rather than leisure tourism, including a lot of the major cities. Business tourism & conferencing are often part of the income strategy of cultural venues too.
- BAME people within the creative industry, are more likely to be freelancers than full time staff. The pandemic has really affected these communities

Julian Bird responded:

- Theatres are community assets used for different projects, but we need to wait and see how the funding will be used, and the priority is to get funding out across the UK
- Westminster Council has the most seated venues and will be a case study going forward for members to make use of.
- It has been excellent to see how councils have used venues for different uses within the community during the pandemic.
- Sadly we have already lost many creatives within the sector.
- While UK Theatre have no role in how the funding is allocated, there have been many conversations, pressing on the importance of regional theatre venues.
- All over the UK, BAME communities and freelancers' concerns have been raised.

Decision

Members noted the presentation

Action

Members to request a meeting with Oliver Dowden CBE MP

4 Culture Tourism and Sport Board Terms of Reference and Outside Bodies

Thomas French introduced the Terms of Reference for the Culture Tourism and Sport Board 2020/21 and asked members to note the continuing membership of the board.

Decision

Members noted the membership and agreed the Board's Terms of Reference for 2020/21.

5 Board Workplan

Ian Leete outlined the Board's workplan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as agreed at the June 2020 Board. Ian Leete also updated members on the Board progress since June.

Members made the following comments

- When press releases have been dispatch, can members see which publications publish them?
- There needs to be a greater emphasis on ensuring the leisure industry survives.
- The LGA have provided all the information about the extent of this crisis, but now, as members, we need to ensure that we save the arts and sport sectors.

Members decided that survival of the sector is the most important objective

Decision

Members agreed the board workplan

Action

An item on press publications to come to the next board

6 LGA Improvement Activity 2020/21

Maria Collinge highlighted the work of the LGA culture, tourism and sport team, noting the improvement activity for both officers and councillors, through existing partnerships with Sport England and Arts Council England.

Members made the following comments:

- This report really shows that local government is stronger working together.
- Statues tell the story of modern Britain. Local government need to tell this story by commissioning works that are important to our communities.
- Return on investment needs to be a theme running across the work of this board.

Officers responded:

- There will be another report on investment coming to the next board.
- Historic England are a partner with us on a potential public realm project.

Decision

Members noted the report.

7 LGA Culture and Tourism Conference 2021

Lauren Lucas highlighted issues associated with the planning and delivery of the Culture and Tourism conference 2021 in the context of COVID-19. Lauren Lucas highlighted how the next Culture and Tourism conference will be online.

Members made the following comments:

- Events need to be spread out, across the year for members with busy workloads to take part in.
- Events on internal tourism would be helpful for many councils right now. As would supporting the sector to survive the economic recovery.

Decision

Members noted the report and agreed to move the Culture and Tourism conference 2021 online.

8 LGA Comprehensive Spending Review Submission

Ian Leete highlighted how the LGA has been developing a submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review. Ian Leete outlined the proposed elements relating to the Culture Tourism and Sport Board's remit, which have been developed from the Board's previous asks, and conversations with members and stakeholders.

Members made the following comments:

- There is need to have a stronger media presence on what the LGA key asks are.
- Two tier authorities are seeing that funding is often going to upper tier councils.
- There is a strong argument that money should get where it's needed as quickly as possible, organisations will rely on swift action for survival in the current climate and for the foreseeable future.

Decision

Members noted the report.

9 Key lines on Culture, Tourism and Sport

Ian Leete set out the current key lobbying lines and sector statistics across the remit of the LGA culture, tourism and sport board.

Members made the following comments:

- This report has pulled together a lot of the key points that the board makes and will be helpful for members taking it back to their communities.

Decision

Members noted the report.

10 Economic Recovery

Sonika Sidhu summarised the key forums the LGA is involved in with Government to address issues of economic recovery. Sonika Sidhu also provided members with an update on key economic recovery issues being raised by councils and how the LGA will be supporting councils through our improvement work.

Decision

Members noted the work the LGA is doing around economic recovery in several different forums

11 National Planning Reforms

Christina Kaiser reported that the Government has recently published two consultations which include proposals for both long-term structural changes to the planning system in England and more immediate amendments to existing processes.

Decision

Members noted the report

12 Libraries Taskforce

Ian Leete outlined the achievements of the Taskforce over its lifespan, and highlighted, the sector bodies and successor groups, areas where there remains work to be done to support the library sector.

Decision

Membered cleared the report for publication.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chair	Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Julian German	Cornwall Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Clare Coghill	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Members	Cllr Derek Bastiman	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Matthew Lee	South Kesteven District Council
	Cllr Cath Homer	Northumberland Council
	Cllr Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
	Cllr Phil Seeva	Cornwall Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Peter Kelly	Preston City Council
	Cllr Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Muhammed Butt	Brent Council
	Cllr Dhanisha Patel	Bridgend County Borough Council
	Cllr Jane Black	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Chris White	Hertfordshire County Council
	Cllr Tom Hollis	Ashfield District Council

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

£100 million for public leisure

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

On 22nd October 2020, [Government announced details of a further £1 billion funding](#) round for councils over winter. This included the announcement of £100 million ringfenced for council leisure centres most in need.

Kevin Mills, Director of Capital Investment at Sport England, and James Wurr, Head of Sports Participation at DCMS, are attending the Board to discuss the purpose of the fund and outline the application process.

Recommendation:

That the Board note the report.

Actions

Officers will work with Sport England and DCMS to maximise the impact of the funding and lobby for additional resources to stabilise the public leisure sector.

Contact officer: Ian Leete
Position: Senior Adviser
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£100 million for public leisure

Background

1. Public leisure centres have been hard hit by the pandemic. Losing income during the lockdown periods, coupled with high ongoing costs, and a limited ability to access Government support outside of the Job Retention Scheme, has left public leisure provision in an unstable position.
2. The [LGA has undertaken extensive lobbying](#) on the subject, in partnership with other sector bodies, including UK Active and Community Leisure UK, and mobilising member councils to write to their MPs, the Minister for Sport, and the Prime Minister. We have also provided immediate support and advice to members as they seek to support their providers.
3. Sport England, DCMS and MHCLG have been instrumental in securing Treasury approval for this funding. As part of that work, Grant Thornton were commissioned to conduct a 'state of the market' analysis, which identified a funding need of between £700 million to £1 billion in terms of lost funding.

The fund

4. Full details of the fund are yet to be announced, and our speakers will be able to provide more information on current thinking. However, the following details are in the public domain:
 - 4.1. The fund will support those councils with outsourced leisure provision, whether to a private provider or a community trust. It will not be available to those with in-house services, who are able to instead access the government's lost income match fund. It is estimated that about 250 councils will be eligible to apply for the new funding.
 - 4.2. The fund is to support the reopening of leisure facilities, rather than to cover previous financial losses.
 - 4.3. It will be a bidding process. However, the bidding process is being used to refine financial understanding and strengthen the business case for further funding, rather than to force councils into competition with each other.
 - 4.4. It is expected that the fund will open in December, with all funds disbursed before end of March 2021, if not earlier. However, this is subject to final Treasury clearance of the proposed delivery mechanism.
5. Sport England has run two roundtables for councils and directors of finance to test the approach, which the LGA attended, and a separate walkthrough of the application process to allow the LGA and District Councils Network to comment on the approach. Further testing of a refined process has since been undertaken with selected councils.

Points to consider

6. The Board may wish to explore the following points with the speakers:

- 6.1. Expected timescales for the application process and distributing the money
- 6.2. The types of costs that the funding will cover
- 6.3. What is being done to make the case for additional funding, and any support that the LGA can provide to help with the case
- 6.4. Whether the revealed weaknesses in the market will be addressed in the forthcoming Sport England strategy or in DCMS' long term plans for public leisure.

Implications for Wales

7. This fund is England only.

Financial Implications

8. None.

Next steps

9. The LGA will help communicate the fund and application process to councils.

10. We will continue to lobby for further funding to be made available for this service.

Spending Review 2020

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The Spending Review (SR) 2020 took place on Wednesday 25 November. The LGA had submitted proposals to the Review, and published an on-the-day briefing in response to the announcements.

This paper highlights the specific elements with relevance to culture, tourism and sport.

Recommendation

That the Board note the report.

Actions

Officers will continue lobbying activity in line with the Board's steer and the key asks put forward in our SR submission.

Contact officer: Ian Leete
Position: Senior Adviser
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Spending Review 2020

Background

1. The 2020 Spending Review outlines the Government's spending plans for 2021/22 by setting budgets for each central government department. It had originally been intended to cover three years revenue funding, and four years for capital funding. However, it was reduced to a one year review in light of the economic and fiscal uncertainty caused by Covid-19.
2. The [LGA had briefed on the basis of a three year review](#), before the shortened version was announced. It contained a series of CTS recommendations, approved by the Board at its September meeting. Key asks included:
 - 2.1. a **strategic investment of £500 million for councils to invest in leisure facilities, pitches, and parks** to reduce obesity; ensure a healthier, more active nation in the future; reduce our carbon footprint; and prepare our communities for the inspiration provided by the Commonwealth Games
 - 2.2. a local, **flexible £500 million Green Parks Fund** to help unlock such initiatives, with a £450 million capital element and an ongoing revenue commitment of around £50 million
 - 2.3. a **£100 million funding programme** that builds on the work of the Cultural Destination Programmeⁱ, Great Places Schemeⁱⁱ, and Discover England Fundⁱⁱⁱ which enabled arts and culture organisations to increase their reach by working with the tourism sector
 - 2.4. **£30 million capital funding in libraries to develop a network of makerspaces and public access computers** to turbocharge our country's recovery, close the digital skills divide in many of our most deprived areas, and grow the entrepreneurs and innovators in every council area
 - 2.5. **£500 million to invest in providers of social prescribing facilities**, including leisure centres and libraries which support community activities
 - 2.6. £100 million capital funding available to **convert disused retail units on the high streets into creative studios** to enable creative industries (worth £111 billion GDP) to thrive and drive footfall to high streets by offering chance to grow entrepreneurs and innovators for the future by delivering 3d printing, coding and display spaces for creative experimentation.
3. The LGA produced an [on-the-day briefing](#) and an [accompanying press release](#) which was quoted in multiple newspapers in the following days. The overall position on local government finances was: *"the Spending Review provides more certainty for councils next year but the long-term outlook remains unclear. Public finances will undoubtedly be under huge strain in the years ahead but investment in our local public services is critical to our national recovery next year and beyond."*

CTS-related Spending Review announcements

4. The government is supporting the regeneration of towns and communities by targeting further investment at places most in need by: • launching a new Levelling Up Fund worth £4 billion for England... this new cross-departmental Fund for England will invest in a broad range of high value local projects up to £20 million.. including arts and culture. *(Page 36, paragraph 3.16)*
5. The government will develop a UK-wide framework for investment in places receiving funding and prioritising: investment in communities and place including cultural and sporting facilities, civic, green and rural infrastructure, community-owned assets, neighbourhood and housing improvements, town centre and transport improvements and digital connectivity. *(Page 37, box 3.1)*
6. £118.5 million one-year Birmingham Commonwealth Games funding to support the games in 2022. *(Page 38, figure 3.1)*
7. Funding from the Cultural Investment Fund for Coventry's UK City of Culture 2021 programme. *(Page 38, figure 3.1)*
8. To support the world-leading culture and heritage sectors, SR20 includes:
 - 8.1 over £150 million to continue to strengthen our cultural and heritage infrastructure, including through the Cultural Investment Fund and Museums Infrastructure Fund, enabling the development of British Library North and continued investment in the Heritage High Streets programme
 - 8.2 more than £100 million of capital investment for DCMS-supported bodies working across culture, heritage, and sports
 - 8.3 over £320 million for our internationally renowned galleries and museums. *(Page 81, paragraph 6.87)*
9. The settlement also provides:
 - 9.1 over £150 million in 2021-22 for upcoming major events, including the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Festival UK and the celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee
 - 9.2 over £60 million for Sport England to increase participation in sport and support vital projects in communities across the country. *(Page 81, paragraph 6.88)*
10. This settlement includes the following priority outcomes:
 - 10.1 Increase economic growth and productivity through improved digital connectivity
 - 10.2 Grow and evolve our sectors domestically and globally, in particular those sectors most affected by Covid-19, including culture, sport, civil society, and the creative industries. *(Page 81, paragraph 6.90)*

11. The Department for International Trade's (DIT) settlement [will]... continue to contribute to the £60 million cross-government GREAT Britain and Northern Ireland Campaign that plays a key role promoting the UK to visitors, students and investors. (*Page 83, paragraph 6.97*)

LGA view:

12. Culture and the creative industries, tourism and sport services are among those that have been hardest hit by Covid-19, yet have the potential to contribute significantly to economic recovery and personal resilience over the forthcoming years. The recognition throughout the spending review document of their importance is a positive sign, including their explicit inclusion in the objectives for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Funds.
13. However, leisure services are in need of an immediate injection of funding if they are to keep services going until the investment from the Spending review is available, and to enable them to benefit from the capital investments announced today. It is important that Government announces a second investment on top of the £100 million already announced. The £60 million funding announced to increase sports participation must target youth sports, in light of the dramatic decrease in activity over the period of the pandemic, and seek to address the significant inequalities that have also been highlighted by Covid-19.
14. While the ongoing investment into the GREAT campaign is important, Government must undertake a full review of destination management organisations and ensure they have the funding they require to support local visitor economies to recover and attract visitors.
15. Councils play a vital role in local place-shaping and spend over £2 bn a year on cultural, sporting and related services. This contribution needs to be recognised by giving them a role in shaping the details and distribution of the funding schemes announced.

Implications for Wales

16. The majority of the specific announcements relate to England only. However, the Welsh Assembly will receive a proportion of funding, determined by the Barnett formula, to develop its own investment programmes into culture, tourism and sport.
17. We will liaise with Welsh colleagues on any UK-wide implications, or opportunities for shared lobbying.

Financial Implications

18. All CTS services appear to be included in scope for the £4 billion Levelling Up Fund and the unspecified amount available through the UK Shared prosperity Fund. They will additionally benefit from the £100 million capital fund allocated to DCMS arms-length

bodies, including Arts Council England and Sport England. All this is capital funding, not revenue funding.

19. Sport services will additionally benefit from a £60 million fund to increase participation.
20. There is no specific funding for tourism and it is unlikely the £60 million for the GREAT fund will directly support council's plans for the visitor economy. The £320 million announced for galleries and museums is similarly intended for the national portfolio, and not to support local cultural assets.

Next steps

21. Officers will continue lobbying to ensure that CTS services remain embedded in the design of the Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund. To do this, we will draw on the individual proposals set out in paragraph 2 to illustrate the opportunities.
22. We will engage VisitEngland in an urgent conversation about funding and support for local visitor economies, including destination management organisations; and seek clarity on the status of the planned tourism zones.
23. The Board is invited to identify any further amendments to the workplan that may be needed in response to the Spending Review.

ⁱ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/cultural-destinations#section-1>

ⁱⁱ [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding-finder/great-place-scheme#:~:text=The%20Great%20Place%20Scheme%20is,cohesion%20and%20health%20and%20wellbeing\).](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding-finder/great-place-scheme#:~:text=The%20Great%20Place%20Scheme%20is,cohesion%20and%20health%20and%20wellbeing).)

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.visitbritain.org/discover-england-fund>

LGA Culture and Tourism Conference 2021

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction

Summary

This report gives an update on planning of the Culture and Tourism conference 2021. At the last Board meeting it was agreed that in light of the restrictions associated with COVID-19, the event would take place in the form of online webinars over the course of three days. The topic would be the role of culture, tourism and sport in supporting a national recovery.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd March 2021 have now been identified for the events. Board members are invited to note initial plans for the webinars, to hold the proposed dates in their diaries and to share any views on content.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to approve current plans for the format of the event and to share views in relation to content.

Actions

Officers to progress as directed.

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LGA Culture and Tourism Conference 2021

Background

1. The LGA's Culture and Tourism Conference 2020, took place just before lockdown on the 3rd and 4th March in Portsmouth. The event had a theme of 'making the most of your heritage' and received positive feedback from participants. It attracted over 70 delegates over the course of two days and featured study trips to heritage sites across the city.
2. Following discussion with Lead Members and the full CTS Board in September, it was agreed that the 2021 conference would take place online, over the course of three webinars in one week. Each webinar would focus on different elements of the LGA portfolio: one on tourism, one on sport and one on culture.
3. This decision was taken on the basis of restrictions associated with COVID-19, but also on the success the team has achieved in delivering online events since March this year. Virtual events have received high levels of positive feedback and have allowed us to reach far greater audiences than would ordinarily be the case with their in-person equivalents.

Format

4. LGA webinars tend to follow a standard format based on the experience of our events team in delivering successful online events and activities. They are usually limited to an hour and a half to reduce 'Zoom fatigue' and feature a series of speakers, followed by a panel discussion facilitated by the Chair and informed by questions submitted by attendees via the Q&A function.
5. Based on discussions at the September CTS Board, it was agreed we would hold three webinar style events over three days, each covering a different aspect of the CTS portfolio. The following dates have been identified:
 - Monday 1st March 2020 (10.30-12.00)
 - Tuesday 2nd March 2020 (10.30-12.00)
 - Wednesday 3rd March 2020 (10.30-12.00)



Content

- 6. It was previously agreed that the content of the conference would deal explicitly with the important role culture, tourism and sport can play in our national recovery from COVID-19, particularly with reference to our economic recovery.
- 7. This theme would bring together some of our recent work on creative regeneration, the Cultural Strategy in a Box and the creative economy. Topics within this theme could include:
 - 7.1 How can sport and leisure support the levelling up agenda?
 - 7.2 How can councils support the recovery and growth of the creative economy?
 - 7.3 What next for cultural regeneration?
 - 7.4 What does the visitor economy need in order to recover?
- 8. Subject to speakers accepting our invitation, we are proposing the following agenda for each event.

Culture

10.30	Welcome from Chair (Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson)
10.35	Introduction from Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister for Culture
10.45	Where next for culture? The contribution of culture to our national recovery. Sir Nick Serota, Chair of Arts Council England (or Darren Henley, Chief Executive of ACE)
11.00	Case study 1
11.10	Case study 2
11.20	Discussion

Tourism

10.30	Welcome from Chair (Cllr Julian German)
10.35	Introduction from Nigel Huddleston MP, Minister for Tourism
10.45	How can tourism contribute to our national recovery? Kate Nicholls, CEO UK Hospitality (Patricia Yates, Director, Strategy and Communication, Visit Britain)
11.00	Case study 1
11.10	Case study 2
11.20	Discussion

Sport

10.30	Welcome from Chair (Cllr Peter Golds)
10.35	Introduction from Tim Hollingsworth, Chief Executive, Sport England
10.45	Where next for sport and physical activity? UK Active



11.00	Case study 1
11.10	Case study 2
11.20	Discussion

9. Possible case studies include those taken from our recent publications '[Leisure Under Lockdown: how culture and leisure services responded to COVID-19](#)' and '[Creative Places: supporting your local creative economy](#)'.

Hearts for the Arts Awards

10. The LGA is again partnering with the National Campaign for the Arts to support the 2021 Hearts for the Arts Awards [Hearts for the Arts Awards](#), celebrating local authority and cultural trust arts champions and creative community projects.
11. Nominations for the awards are now open until the 6th December 2020 and nominations can be put forward in three categories:
- Best Arts Champion – Councillor
 - Best Arts Champion – Local Authority or Cultural Trust Worker
 - Best Arts project
12. Nominations should be from projects across the UK that have taken place between 10 October 2019 and 20 November 2020. The awards are also open to cultural trusts working on behalf of local authorities.
13. Winners will be chosen by a judging panel of leading arts figures and the awards will be presented as part of the Culture, Tourism and Sport conference in March.
14. We are proposing to hold the awards ceremony as a separate hour-long event during the week of the conference. Members views are sought on the format for this event and ways of ensuring appropriate attendance levels.

Financial Implications

15. Virtual events have the advantage of being considerably cheaper to run than their physical equivalent and we would anticipate costs associated with the conference to be minimal. There are some costs associated with recording events, as they have to be transcribed to produce subtitles.

Next steps

16. The Board is asked to approve current plans for the format of the CTS conference and Hearts for the Arts Awards (paragraph 14), and to share views on these plans.

Public affairs and communications work

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

An update on the LGA's lobbying and communications work.

Recommendations

That the Board notes the report and offers recommendations on taking our lobbying work forward.

Actions

Officers will identify further opportunities to engage with parliamentarians, including through relevant All-Party Parliamentary Groups.

Contact officer: Laura Johnson
Position: Public Affairs Support Officer
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Public affairs work

Select Committees

1. We submitted written evidence to the [Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee inquiry on sport in our communities](#). In our evidence, we highlighted local government's role in supporting and maintaining sports facilities and leisure centres and the importance of central government investing in these ageing facilities so those disadvantaged communities who need the infrastructure most continue to have access. We also stressed the importance of physical activity on mental and physical health, and how councils are integral in rebuilding the health of the nation.
2. We have been called to give oral evidence to the [House of Lords Committee on the National Plan for Sport and Recreation](#). The Board's Chair, Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, will be giving evidence to the Committee on Wednesday 16 November at 4.30pm. We are waiting to hear the focus of the session, and will update the Board in the new year when the session has taken place.

Debates and oral questions

3. [Briefed MPs ahead of a Westminster Hall debate on COVID-19 restrictions on gyms and sport](#). In the debate, [MPs recongised the importance of gyms and leisure centres on mental and physical health](#). LGA Vice-President Catherine Mckinnell MP (Labour, Newcastle Upon Tyne North) highlighted that while the £100 million for leisure centres is welcome, there are questions around whether councils will have the freedom to provide help where it is needed most. Responding to the debate, the Minister for Sport, Heritage and Tourism, Nigel Huddleston MP, paid tribute "to all the hard work carried out by sports' governing bodies and clubs across the country to ensure that we were ready for the return of sport—from gyms, leisure centres and pools".
4. [Briefed MPs ahead of a debate on spending of DCMS on support measures for the DCMS sectors during and after the COVID-19 pandemic](#). In the debate, DCMS Select Committee member Damian Hinds MP (Conservative, East Hampshire) highlighted the work of his council supporting local cultural and sporting assets, including Grayshott Concerts, the Phoenix theatre and Petersfield rugby club.
5. We briefed MPs ahead of a debate on the contribution of theatres, live music venues and other cultural attractions to the local economy. LGA Vice-President, Andrew Lewer MP (Conservative, Northampton South) [quoted our briefing and called on the Government to "adopt a place-based approach to recovery"](#) by ensuring that councils are at the table for discussions". He added that councils are one of the biggest investors in cultural activity, spending around £1.1 billion a year, so they should be part of future discussions.

Other

6. The Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson, and Cllr Brigid Jones, member of the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, took part in a Devolution APPG meeting on fiscal devolution, where the idea of a Tourism Levy was discussed. (Full details of this meeting can be found at the bottom of this page: <https://connectpa.co.uk/devolution-appg/>)
7. Briefed LGA Vice-President Catherine West MP (Labour, Hornsey and Wood Green) with our lines on the leisure sector, following a briefing call with Parliamentarians on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

Events

8. Cllr Vernon-Jackson chaired a joint event with the Football Foundation on '[Unlocking the power of football investment](#)' on 19 November 2020. The event marked the culmination of two years work by the Foundation to develop a [local football facilities plan](#) for every council area. These were published on the day, and the event explored how areas could access the £100 million being made available by the Foundation to deliver the plans, and the benefits of working in partnership to improve facilities.
9. Attended by 275 delegates, the event featured presentations from Gareth Southgate, Tim Hollingsworth, Martin Glenn, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Sunderland City Council.
10. The CTS team also supported delivery of the '[Irrecoverable losses on income generating contracts](#)' event on 27 November. This briefed councils on the Government's 75% income match promise, along with wider LGA work on supporting contracts. The CTS contribution focused on the issues relating to public leisure contracts.
11. The team has also delivered a range of improvement webinars as part of our contracts with Arts Council England and Sport England. These are covered in the separate improvement paper.

Press and media

12. Cllr Vernon-Jackson wrote two articles for the October edition of *First* magazine:
 - 12.1. [Just do it](#) explored the key role of sport and physical activity in supporting and leading communities through Covid-19.
 - 12.2. [Supporting economic recovery](#) explored the way in which libraries can support an economic recovery, through their CV writing and job clubs, business and intellectual property centres, and free internet access – which was recognised as an essential service during lockdown and granted an exemption to keep operating.

13. [COVID-19 has devastated councils' park services](#) - Parks proved to be a lifeline for local communities during the COVID-19 crisis but the pandemic has had a devastating impact on councils' park services.
14. [Councils one of the top investors in culture, sport and leisure](#) - Councils remain one of the biggest investors in culture, sport and leisure - spending over £2 billion a year.
15. [LGA responds to further details around £1 billion COVID-19 funding for councils](#) - Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of the LGA's Resources Board, responds to the details around the further £1 billion announced for councils by the Government earlier this month, including £100 million for leisure services.

Implications for Wales

16. Culture, tourism and sport services are devolved to the Welsh Assembly, although there remains significant cross-over in practice and need.

Financial implications

17. None.

Next steps

18. The CTS and Public Affairs teams are meeting to discuss further opportunities to influence parliamentarians, including seeking the input and expertise of the LGA's Vice-Presidents.

LGA Improvement Activity 2020/21

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper updates the Board on the delivery of the Sport England and Arts Council England Improvement awards for 2020/21. Due to the implications of the Government's guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic, all activity is being delivered through a series of online webinars, this will continue until 1 March 2021 (May 2021 for Sport England which falls within the permitted timescales). This report updates members about improvement activity which has been delivered and which is scheduled to take place across both awards.

Recommendation:

That the Board note the report.

Actions:

Officers will work with Sport England and Arts Council England to co-design and deliver Improvement activity until March 2021.

Contact officer: Maria Collinge
Position: Project Support Officer
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Email: maria.collinge@local.gov.uk

LGA Improvement Activity 2020/21

Background

Sport England

1. The award from Sport England to the LGA to deliver the Leadership Essentials Programme for Sport and Physical Activity has been repurposed to deliver an online improvement programme for officers. The decision was taken to focus on officers in the first instance due to the operational nature of the pandemic, however, the plan is to deliver a programme for elected members early next year, which we would welcome your views on.
2. During the initial crisis, the LGA and Sport England worked together to quickly develop a COVID –19 response programme for alumni of the flagship Leadership Essentials programme. In total 22 events took place between April and September 2020. The purpose of the programme was to provide a space for officers to share learning, concerns and for the LGA and Sport England to identify the challenges of COVID-19 and to learn from delegates about what they were experiencing on the ground and how we could develop their leadership skills to act as leaders of place in a post-COVID-19 world. The programme was well received and additional elements such as action learning sets and continued leadership skill development have been devised to keep supporting this group.
3. In response to the issues raised during the COVID-19 response programme, we developed in partnership with Sport England, a refreshed Leadership Essentials programme for officers, this is currently being delivered, with first cohort recently completed and a further two cohorts planned for January and April.

Arts Council England

4. Despite having to reprioritise planned expenditure towards their Covid-19 emergency response fund, Arts Council England were able to commit £40 000 to continue our well-regarded improvement programme for culture and libraries. In partnership with ACE, we have refreshed the programme for councillors and officers to help them champion cultural activity in their local area and in a Covid-19 context.
5. Due to current Government regulations and guidelines, all improvement activity across both Sport England and ACE contracts is being delivered virtually until both contracts end in March 2021.

Planned activity

Sport England

6. The LGA is currently in the process of piloting an online version of the Leadership Essentials programme for officers. The refreshed content explores a number of key challenges, including: health inequalities, financial uncertainty, leisure facilities, whilst also exploring the opportunities COVID-19 has created to embed sport and physical activity in wider council service areas and corporate agendas (climate change, obesity, inactivity, burdens on health and social care).
7. The following activity is planned:
 - 7.1. Cohort 1 (9 November 2020 – 4 December 2020): Has been completed recently with 18 delegates attending from 9 councils, 1 trust, and 8 Active Partnerships. Feedback is being collated and will be reported at the next Board meeting.
 - 7.2. Cohort 2 (January - February 2020): we are in the process of recruiting 20 delegates from a combination of councils, trusts, and Active Partnerships.
 - 7.3. Cohort 3 (April – May 2020) we are in the process of recruiting 20 delegates from a combination of councils, trusts, and Active Partnerships.
8. The LGA has identified the need to deliver a programme for elected members. We are in early conversations with Sport England around a programme for councillors, which is likely to take place between January and March 2021. Board members are invited to identify key issues that they feel delegates on the councillor programme will wish to hear about and the leadership skills which would be useful to them.

Arts Council England: 2020/21

9. The LGA have been awarded a grant of £40,000 to deliver a series of online activity between September 2020 and March 2021. £30,000 has been allocated to libraries and £10,000 allocated to culture.
10. The programme is currently being delivered to support both officers and councillors to learn from the challenges of COVID-19, and support delegates to think through how innovation can be applied to the upcoming period of recovery.
11. The following events have taken place:
 - 11.1. 2 x library best practice seminars attended by 18 officers and 14 councillors. These focused on supporting shielded and vulnerable communities, and supporting digital innovation. Case studies were provided by Norfolk County Council, Reading Borough Council, and Warwickshire County Council.
 - 11.2. 2 x library advocacy workshops, one on public health (65 delegates) and one on education and skills (936 delegates).
12. The following events are still to take place:

- 12.1. 1 x [library advocacy workshop on economic renewal](#), 11 January 2021.
- 12.2. 4 x Leadership Essentials for councillors (14 January 2021 – 24 February 2021).
We are currently recruiting up to 20 councillors onto the programme, which will take place over four separate sessions.
13. A peer challenge for Nottinghamshire has been arranged for 1 – 2 February 2021, following an earlier postponement due to Covid-19. Oxfordshire is also awaiting a rescheduled peer challenge.
14. For 2020/21, we have received funding for 3 recovery and renewal panels, which will be focused on learning from the impact of Covid-19. Because of this, we did not openly advertise as usual but worked with ACE to identify 15 services with interesting work who were invited to bid for a panel. The following councils have now been awarded a panel:
 - 14.1. Bradford City Council – 20 January 2021
 - 14.2. Kent County Council – TBC
 - 14.3. South Tyneside Council – TBC.
15. A review of the Culture Leadership Essentials from the past two years is being undertaken. All findings and insights will be reviewed to support the ongoing development of the programme.
16. In order to increase awareness of our improvement work, and share the learning beyond those able to attend as delegates, we have refreshed our webpages to set out our [Covid-19 related improvement work](#) and our regular [improvement work for culture, tourism and sport](#). This sits alongside some of the toolkits the Board has commissioned.

Financial Implications

17. Due to the necessity to move to an online programme and a number of funds rolling forward from the 2019/20 award to the 2020/21 award, we expect the Leadership Essentials Programme for Sport and Physical Activity to incur an underspend. We will shortly be starting conversations with Sport England about how best we utilise this underspend and potentially roll it forward to next year's award, as we hope to negotiate a new agreement for the 2021/22 Leadership Essentials Programme. To date, we expect to spend in the region of £175 000 against the Sport England award total value of £263 550.
18. The ACE programme is currently on track to be delivered within the planned budget.

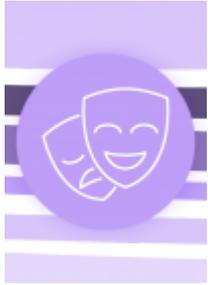
Next steps

19. Officers will deliver the programme as outlined above.

20. Board members are invited to advise on the knowledge and skills councillors will require to better support them lead the sport and physical activity sector through a period of recovery and renewal. These will then be fed into early discussions and developments with Sport England.

21. The LGA recognises the importance of addressing the underrepresentation of BAME communities in leadership positions in both the culture and sport sector. Both programme areas will need to build this into their design, communication and delivery moving forward. We will work with the Board's equality champion and sector experts to develop this further.

Leisure under lockdown: how culture and leisure services responded to COVID-19 - full report



Case study report

Culture, tourism, leisure and sport
10 Nov 2020

Jump to section



Foreword

During the first lockdown people sang and danced in the streets, they covered communities with rainbows, embraced open spaces and rallied round to support the most vulnerable in society. We witnessed the very best of humanity and people used culture, sport and leisure to connect and take care of each other.

From online murder mysteries to virtual gyms, streamed rhyme time sessions and lamppost artwork, culture and leisure services across the country have responded to the needs of communities in lockdown: reaching people who face digital exclusion, supporting children's creative learning at home and connecting to people who were isolated and alone.

Engagement in culture and leisure activity delivered or funded by local authorities provided many with a lifeline in the early days of the pandemic, while across the country people found solace in their local parks and open spaces. Alongside this staff and volunteers across these services have joined the front line in response to the crisis: making visitors for care homes, managing food bank distributions, preparing and delivering meals and making regular phone calls for people shielding.

The massive popularity of creative, cultural and leisure activities during lockdown demonstrates the true value of these often-squeezed services. In extreme circumstances, they have been priceless in preserving people's mental and physical

wellbeing. We must not forget this lesson.

“ Challenging budget positions led to spend on culture and related services being reduced by 45 percent in the nine years between 2009/10 and 2018/19.

Despite this, councils remain one of the biggest investors in the sector, spending over £2 billion a year on services related to culture. Many services also generate significant levels of income and inward investment, as well as have a multiplier effect on the local economy, under normal economic conditions.

Council budgets will be under even greater strain coming out of this crisis, but it would be short-sighted to put culture and leisure services at the front of the list for cuts. Besides playing a vital role in supporting better outcomes in health, education, community cohesion and equalities, culture and the creative industries also contribute £10.8 billion to the UK economy each year and were among the fastest growing sectors in 2019. We need to ensure that Government also recognises this.

We must embrace the new ambition for innovative digital solutions that reach new audiences, while also recognising that they remain out of reach for the most vulnerable, for whom access to public buildings has never been more important. We must consolidate the new partnerships generated by the crisis to ensure culture and leisure is central to efforts to tackle the challenges faced by our communities. We must continue to give services permission to innovate.

Spending on culture and leisure is not a luxury: it is a commitment to the wellbeing of our residents and the economic future of our local places. We hope the case studies in this report will go some way to illustrating the impact of this commitment.

Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Chair of the LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Summary

The case studies in this publication highlight just a few of the many ways in which culture, leisure and sports have responded quickly and innovatively to the challenges posed by COVID-19.

They are representative of huge swathes of activity happening throughout the country and there are many more examples which we were unable to include here. They represent a snapshot in time from lockdown in March 2020 to the easing of lockdown and reopening of museums, libraries, leisure centres and theatres from August 2020.

We have grouped the case studies into three broad themes.

1. **Digital Innovation**

Council services responded quickly to the closure of their buildings by expanding their digital offer. These examples illustrate some of this new work and explore the impact on services and communities.

2. **Community action**

Access to the internet is by no means universal and the examples in this section highlight some of the important ways in which culture and leisure services and organisations connected with vulnerable communities, tackled loneliness and engaged directly with those affected by COVID-19.

3. **Frontline response**

Many culture and leisure staff were redeployed during the early days of the pandemic, to support wider council efforts to address the impact of the pandemic. These case studies demonstrate some of the ways in which their specialist professional skills were vital to response work outside culture and leisure.

The examples captured in this report highlights the important role culture and leisure was able to play at this time, connecting people, combatting loneliness, supporting educational outcomes, and helping those who were shielding. They show that public interest in these services was high during the first lockdown.

- Some libraries saw a 600 percent increase in digital membership as well as fourfold increase in the number of ebooks borrowed. Estimates suggest that libraries made 5 million additional digital loans and loaned 3.5 million more ebooks than usual.
- Loans of online e-books, e-magazines and audiobooks went up an average of 63 percent in March compared with the previous year
- 120,000 people joined libraries in the three weeks after lockdown began, a significant increase on previous years.
- Kingston Library Service reached on average 10,000 people for each of its online Rhyme Time sessions.
- Norfolk Libraries' filmed activities were viewed over 172,000 times. That includes over 93,000 views of Bounce and Rhyme session videos.
- Barnsley Museums Facebook page alone had a reach of over 5 million people. Around 500 people a day took part in online daily challenges created under the banner of 'Beat the Boredom'. Over 20,000 took part in tours online around exhibitions

- Hackney Council had around 1,700 viewers on their Windrush council page and around 3,000 in total for their virtual Windrush Festival.

The case studies also demonstrate the positive impact these services had on residents and on council staff.

- Magna Vitae in Lincolnshire were able to undertake 1,539 wellbeing calls and to distribute 110 'Bags of Happiness Survival Kits' across 4 towns.
- The Festival Bridge organisation in Norwich distributed printed creative learning packs to 7,500 families in May, and 18,000 families ahead of the summer holidays.
- Gateshead Libraries produced 7,500 visors and made deliveries to over 60 different private care homes, paramedics, the Red Cross, the Council's undertaker service, schools and nurseries as well as satisfying the demand to help protect Council care workers.
- The archive team in Gloucestershire allowed over 2000 colleagues to work successfully from home and continue delivering the councils' wide range of services by creating a new system for logging and delivering post.
- The Rugby parks team made up and distributed nearly 1,700 supply packages to over 300 shielding residents. Supply packages also contained activity packs created by Rugby Art Gallery and Museum, which included puzzle books, sketch pads, pencils, paints and 'lockdown diaries' for children. Their foodbank operation provided more than 700 food parcels to residents and delivered nearly 150 parcels to people unable to visit the foodbank to collect.

While culture and leisure services and organisations have played a vital role within their communities, they also face uncertain futures. The Government's announcement of a £1.57 billion support package for the arts is very welcome, and yet it may be too late for many. The experience of a second lockdown will place further pressure on organisations already at breaking point.

Julian Bird, CEO of UK Theatre and the Society of London Theatre, told the Digital, Media, Culture and Sport Committee that **70 per cent of theatres and production companies risk going out of business by the end of this year**. The Music Venue Trust estimates that 93 per cent of the grassroots venue network faces permanent closure and **The Association of Independent Festivals says that 92 per cent of its members face permanent collapse** ^[1].

The leisure sector continues to feel the impact of COVID-19, with many providers facing the risk of closure. The majority of council leisure providers have been ineligible for much of the initial funding support due to their business models and typically charitable status. They have high fixed operating costs, which they have continued to

incur whilst closed and are reliant on income generation, which has been placed under pressure by closures and reduced capacity on reopening due to social distancing.

Community Leisure UK indicates that as of September 2020 returning gym memberships have stalled and started to decline because of a loss of consumer confidence^[2]. Their research also showed that only 56 percent of facilities reopened when they were allowed to, with the most common reason for keeping facilities closed being the economic unviability of reopening. In addition to this, **over a third of leisure trusts feel their future is insecure and facilities remain at risk** ^[3].

This is a significant concern for councils, who in England are responsible for a third of swimming pools and grass pitches; 13 per cent of sports halls; and almost of fifth of all health and fitness facilities. They also run nearly **3000 libraries**, over **350 museums**, numerous theatres and galleries, and are responsible for many historic building and monuments.

Losing these services would leave many people and families without access to affordable culture, leisure and physical activity provision. Besides their intrinsic value to society, they play an important role in tackling health inequalities, delivering educational opportunity, promoting community cohesion and generating economic growth.

As some of the stories in this publication show, the impact of the pandemic has not been evenly distributed in communities. **Public Health England research** has shown that among people already diagnosed with COVID-19, people who were 80 or older were seventy times more likely to die than those under 40. The risk of dying among those diagnosed with COVID-19 was also higher in those living in the more deprived areas than those living in the least deprived; and higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups than in White ethnic groups ^[4].

These inequalities are not limited to medical outcomes. Many of the groups most affected by COVID-19 are also more likely to experience digital poverty, while research from **Public Health England has shown** that the most economically deprived areas have less available good quality public greenspace and that people exposed to poor quality environments are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes than people who enjoy good quality environments ^[5].

Councils will have a significant role to play in defining the 'new normal' for communities, in tackling health inequalities and delivering the 'levelling up' agenda. These case studies demonstrate that culture and leisure can be central to these objectives.

Councils currently spend £2.2 billion a year on culture and leisure services in England, making them one of the biggest investors in this area. As largely discretionary services, they will be under huge pressure as a result of the **current gap in council finances**, so it is essential we acknowledge the important role culture and leisure has played in community health and wellbeing during COVID-19 and its potential in supporting a positive recovery.

There is an opportunity to build back better and it should not be a question of health or culture when it comes to investment. As these case studies show, the two are deeply intertwined.

“ Through the creativity of our artists, arts organisations, museums and libraries, we will be heard, and we will explore the meaning of all this. We will celebrate, console, commemorate and come together. Through creativity and culture, we will heal.

Darren Henley, Arts Council England

[1] DCMS Select Committee, Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: **First Report** ,
Published: 23 July 2020

[2] Community Leisure UK, Reopening tracker information based on surveys run from mid-August until early October 2020.

[3] **Community Leisure UK Covid-19 Impact Report - August 2020**

[4] Public Health England, **Disparities in the Risk and Outcomes of COVID-19**

[5] Public Health England, **Improving access to greenspace A new review for 2020**

Digital Innovation

When the first lockdown began in March 2020, public buildings across the UK had to close their doors. Despite this, many of the services within them swiftly began to adapt to deliver their offer in different ways to existing customers and new communities.

The following case studies highlight the ways in which culture, leisure and sports services responded quickly and innovatively to provide digital content during lockdown. By creating and delivering digital activities, services maintained a connection to their local communities and in many cases significantly increased their reach.

These examples showcase digital work which often took place in conjunction with direct engagement and/or community action. Most services consulted through this work noted that in future they will be looking to digital solutions to enable them to enhance their core offer. The digital element has not replaced the need for human interaction, but it has successfully enabled services to expand their audiences and make activities more accessible. Key to ensuring the longer-term success of this blended offer is investment in equipment and training for digital activity.

Case studies

- **Libraries providing a lifeline: Libraries from home**
- **Barnsley Museums: Staying safe and engaged**
- **Digital Bootcamp: Building skills to enable local sporting and activity groups to get more people active**
- **Virtual Windrush Generations Festival - Hackney Council**

Community Action

In England, 2.2 million people were identified as being vulnerable to severe impact from the coronavirus (COVID-19). These people were advised to shield from others to protect themselves from the virus. Others found themselves vulnerable in different ways, facing serious challenges to their mental wellbeing through loneliness, or additional pressures placed upon them by the impact of COVID-19.

Many culture, leisure and sports services were well placed to provide their communities with direct support. They used existing networks and connections to ensure some of the most vulnerable people in their communities were looked after during lockdown.

One of the key drivers for services was the recognition of digital exclusion amongst their communities. Digital exclusion relates to people have one or more of the following barriers:

- Lack of personal access
- Lack of basic digital skills or confidence to use the internet
- Lack of motivation or perceive the internet to not be relevant to them.

In the UK there are stark inequalities when it comes to digital exclusion. The Good Things Foundation (a social change charity, helping people to improve their lives through digital inclusion) reports that:

- 9 million people struggle to use the internet independently.
- 7 million people are still offline
- At least 82 percent of jobs require digital skills.
- In England, the digital divide is also a north/south divide. 49 percent of people in the South East using the internet fully compared to 18 percent in the North East, and 31 percent in the North West.

The Good Things Foundation warns that COVID-19 exacerbates the digital divide. The challenges compounded by COVID-19 include reduced incomes, redundancies, not being able to afford internet access, isolation, and not knowing where to turn. They report in **Digital Nation 2020** that a recent public poll indicates support for internet access to be recognised as a utility and for every community to have a place to get help with internet skills. In September 2020 they released a **Digital Blueprint** calling for Investment of £130m over 4 years to #FixtheDigitalDivide.

The case studies in this section of the report highlight some of the many ways in which culture and leisure services sought to bridge this divide by offering offline activities and developing community projects targeted at those most vulnerable to the effects of coronavirus.

Case studies

- **Slung Low and Social Care Referrals: No one in Holbeck and Beeston goes hungry**
- **Magna Vitae: Maintaining connections through community projects Local authority: East Lindsey District Council**
- **Festival Bridge: Let's Create - Art packs for children and young people**

- **FEAST: Re-Ignition, funding to support artist engagement in communities**

Frontline Responses

Culture and leisure staff also played an important role in supporting other services' efforts to tackle COVID-19 on the frontline.

The following case studies showcase a variety of ways in which culture, sport and leisure services deployed specialist skills, knowledge, expertise and utilised in-house resources to support frontline activity. This includes libraries making visitors for care homes, archivist staff setting up a new postal system which enabled all council staff to work from home and repurposing leisure centres as food distribution hubs.

Each example provided here showcases services working far beyond business as usual. In each of these organisations, Heads of Service and staff recognised an immediate need to respond to the unprecedented crisis. They stepped up when they were most needed, forming a vital part of frontline efforts to tackle coronavirus.

People took on jobs they had never envisaged before. They played a key role in ensuring the safety of their communities and co-workers. Most of the ways of working outlined in these case studies have since stopped or are in the process of being phased out. Yet they serve as an important reminder of how responsive culture, sport and leisure services can be in a time of crisis.

Case studies

- **COVID-19 Emergency response - PPE production**
- **Nottingham Leisure Services - Creating a Community Hub**
- **Archive staff enable home working: Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucester City Council**
- **Parks responding to a crisis - Rugby Borough Council**
- **The Old Courts Arts Centre: Food parcels and welfare calls; A safety net for the people of Wigan**

Conclusion

While each of the case studies in this publication are unique, they share common stories of adaptiveness, rapid response, community care and kindness. Across England thousands of organisations, their staff, volunteers and contracted artists have responded to the needs of their local communities.

Culture, leisure and sport services have used their existing connections and have sought to extend their reach to ensure no one is left behind. Theatres, museums, libraries, parks and leisure helped the most vulnerable members of their communities.

Throughout the pandemic, inequalities have become more starkly visible between those who have access to support networks, space, IT tools, equipment and skills, and those who don't. While the phrase 'we are all in this together' has often been used, it is clear that it has not been the same experience for everyone.

After the second World War the government recognised the need for investment in the arts alongside health and welfare. Access to great art and culture was seen as vital to helping society to heal. In the US, **Roosevelt's New Deal** supported many artists, actors and playwrights. It was understood that artists could help provide a **vision of US culture** that a nation in trouble could rally behind [8].

Government has invested £1.57 billion in a rescue package for culture, which has been gratefully received by the sector. However, many organisations and individuals are still unable to access packages of support and face an uncertain future. The experience of a second lockdown is likely to increase these challenges.

It is also important to remember that councils themselves currently spend £2.2 billion a year on culture, sport and related services. This funding is now under great pressure as a result of the gap in local government finances that has opened up as a result of COVID-19. The **LGA has warned that councils in England will face a funding gap of more than £5 billion by 2024** to maintain services at current levels [9].

We need to not only protect culture, sport and leisure services but invest in them. Investing in these services means an investment in the long-term health and wellbeing of communities. They are the heart and soul of communities and they are vital in building better societies.

[8]The Guardian, **arts in a pandemic: harness their power**, 9 August 2020

[9] **LGA, Rethinking Public Finances: submission to the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review.**

Acknowledgements

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Alan Lane, Slung Low

Simon Hall, The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

Jonathan Davenport, Old Courts Wigan

This report was produced by CultureRunner on behalf of the Local Government Association.

Further information

Public libraries in England: basic dataset (gov.uk)

The Mendoza Review: an independent review of museums in England (gov.uk)

More publications about Culture, tourism, leisure and sport

Leisure under lockdown: how culture and leisure services responded to COVID-19 - full report

Creative places - supporting your local creative economy

The impact of COVID-19 on culture, leisure tourism and sport

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Parks fit for the future: Financial impact of COVID-19 on park services 2020-21

Purpose of report

For information

Summary

The Local Government Association and the National Lottery Heritage Fund co-funded the production of a set of case studies demonstrating the financial impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on council park services. [The case studies which are available as a web resource, capture financial data that each of the six case studies made available between 23 March and 29 May 2020.](#)

The case studies highlight the challenges and opportunities facing council park services and how councils responded to the pandemic.

The research found a large variation in loss of external income between the six case studies ranging between £87,000 and £8.8 million with a return to pre-COVID-19 levels of income expected to take some time. There was a loss of in-kind volunteer contributions ranging between £12,000 and £1.56 million across the six case studies. All parks remained open where social distancing measures could be put in place, park service staff were redeployed to support the councils' COVID-19 response efforts, additional costs due to implementing social distancing measures and a backlog of maintenance issues has been incurred. Significant opportunities exist with regards to increasing biodiversity, tackling climate change and active travel.

Recommendations:

- Board members are asked to note the content of the case studies
- Share comments and thoughts on this policy area with officers

Officers to action as directed

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Parks fit for the future: Financial impact of COVID-19 on park services 2020-21

Background

1. In April 2020, the LGA and the National Lottery Heritage Fund co-funded the production of [guidance to support parks managers through the first lockdown period](#). This was well received, and remains the most popular LGA covid-19 related tweet, out of 768, with over 1 million views.
2. To support our lobbying work with Government, a set of case studies was also commissioned, demonstrating the financial impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on council park services. The case studies capture financial data that each of the six case studies made available between 23 March and 29 May 2020.
3. The case studies highlight the challenges and opportunities facing council park services and how councils responded to the pandemic.

Key findings

4. [The top 10 key findings found:](#)
 - 4.1. A large variation in loss of external income between the six case studies ranging between £87,000 and £8.8 million across the six case studies.
 - 4.2. Impact of the loss of in-kind volunteer contributions has been significant, ranging between £12,000 and £1.56 million across the six case studies.
 - 4.3. All parks and green spaces remained open throughout the pandemic, with social distancing measures in place, except in those parks constrained by design and where social distancing measures could not be implemented. Play areas and skate parks were particularly difficult to manage during the initial lockdown period.
 - 4.4. The majority of parks service staff were redeployed to support their council's local effort in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They played an invaluable role supporting the vulnerable and shielding residents through for example distributing food parcels and personal protective equipment (PPE), supporting children and adult social care services and lent their skills to bereavement teams and crematoria.
 - 4.5. The first national lockdown has resulted in a maintenance backlog due to the phased return of staff. Some councils have used this opportunity to progress their plans for biodiversity or trial new approaches to service delivery. However, despite the positives, additional staff and / or volunteers will be required to return to pre-COVID-19 levels of service. Additionally, capital projects have been impacted with many stopping during this period.

- 4.6. Commercial income has been impacted the most, council parks services who are more reliant on commercial opportunities have been affected the most with losses ranging between £87,000 - £8.8 million. Key sources of loss of external income included sponsorship opportunities, outdoor events, car parking charges, sports bookings and visitor attractions which ceased or were closed during the lockdown period.
 - 4.7. There is an ongoing loss of income despite many facilities reopening it is anticipated that there will be a continued loss of income as a direct result of the need to employ more staff or reduce visitor numbers in order to comply with social distancing guidelines.
 - 4.8. Additional operational costs have been incurred because of the provision of signage, PPE, enhanced cleansing regimes and the purchase of new equipment.
 - 4.9. Lack of timely and clear guidance in response to COVID-19 and national lockdown rules regarding the closure of facilities and the phased reopening following the lifting of lockdown restrictions; particularly with regard to play areas, toilets and volunteers has had a negative impact on the service's ability to return to normal operations.
 - 4.10. Opportunities for parks to contribute to healthier communities and a greener future through increased biodiversity, an enhanced awareness at national and local level of the importance of parks and green spaces to communities, people's health and mental wellbeing have been identified; as well as a movement towards making the recovery a green one through active travel, climate change mitigation measures and through councils' COVID-19 recovery plans, many of which featured parks.
5. A summary of the key findings from each of the six councils participating in the research can be found below:
 - 5.1. [Leeds City Council](#) has forecast a total annual loss of income of £8.8 million and a loss of up to 126,282 volunteer hours. However, the council has received high levels of public support and support from elected members. Parks features highly in the council's COVID-19 recovery plans and will be a key part of supporting plans around active travel for which the Parks Service will play a key role in maintaining active travel routes. Parks service managers have felt the benefits of being part of the council making them less vulnerable as they are seen as an integral part of the council.
 - 5.2. [Nottingham City Council](#) has forecast that the total annual loss of external income of £295,000 and up to 6,640 lost volunteer hours will be lost. However, the benefits include new online services and new ways to consider how the council communicates both internally and with external partners. The service have also

used the lockdown period to rethink how they maintain parks and whilst the council are keen to recover, they will ensure that the biodiversity bonus provided throughout the lockdown enables the opportunity to accelerate the Nottingham carbon neutral 2028 climate mitigation and ecological targets.

- 5.3. [Plymouth City Council](#) has forecast a total annual loss of external income of £200,000 and up to 966 lost volunteer hours. It has however, presented opportunities to trial new approaches including a more relaxed mowing regime, explore the idea of increasing the number of staff in parks similar to the previous Park Ranger role, to ensure increased monitoring of infrastructure, grounds maintenance and interaction with the local community and focus on carbon reduction, climate emergency and building on the value of parks.
- 5.4. [Rugby Borough Council](#) has forecast a total annual loss of external income of £97,000 and up to 9,459 lost volunteer hours. Although work on capital projects stopped, the council found a way to progress work with the contractor, on the design and build of a skatepark project through the development of an online consultation system with 3D models to engage with local users on the plans. If it proves to be successful the council will adopt similar processes in the future.
- 5.5. [Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council](#) has forecast a total annual loss of external income of £120,500 and up to 13,440 volunteer hours will be lost, Despite the challenges the council trialled new approaches to electronic tennis booking systems, active travel routes and alfresco dining. Visitor counter data available through public health intelligence has been used to assess visitor numbers during lockdown which saw a 40 per cent increase in use. The service plans to understand the demographics and intentions of these visitors in relation to using open spaces after lockdown. As many as 40 per cent of Walsall residents in the town centre do not have access to a garden so the data presents an opportunity to do further work in this area.
- 5.6. [Watford Borough Council](#) has forecast a loss of external income of £86,000 and a loss of in-kind volunteer contributions is estimated between 21 and 40 per cent. However, the situation has resulted in a significant difference in the way the service now communicates and operates and greater awareness and interest from elected members.

Implications for Wales

6. The guidance and best practice are relevant to Welsh councils, although the case studies were drawn from English councils.

Financial Implications

7. The LGA contributed £6 350 from its policy budget, which helped unlock £10 000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project has been completed within budget.

Impact and next steps

8. The final publication was launched on 28 November 2020. We used the opportunity to issue a [press release calling for parks to be explicitly included in the eligibility criteria for the Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#), following details about these funds announced in the Spending Review on 25 November 2020.
9. The press release performed well on twitter and LinkedIn, outperforming all other tweets/posts during the week of 23-29 November, despite being published on the penultimate day. It received 46,517 impressions, 888 engagements, 226 likes and 145 retweets on twitter; and over 5,297 impressions, 75 clicks, 132 engagements and over 1,142 video views on LinkedIn.
10. We are in the process of sharing the findings with key Government departments, including MHCLG, Natural England, and Sport England. This work will form the basis of our lobbying work and media work on parks.

