Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

Agenda

Wednesday, 22 March 2023
1.30 pm

18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

There will be a meeting of the Culture, Tourism & Sport Board at **1.30 pm on Wednesday, 22 March 2023** 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

LGA Hybrid Meetings
All of our meetings are available to join in person at 18 Smith Square or remotely via videoconference as part of our hybrid approach. We will ask you to confirm in advance if you will be joining each meeting in person or remotely so we can plan accordingly, if you wish to attend the meeting in person, please also remember to confirm whether you have any dietary/accessibility requirements. 18 Smith Square is a Covid-19 secure venue and measures are in place to keep you safe when you attend a meeting or visit the building in person.

Please see guidance for Members and Visitors to 18 Smith Square here

Catering and Refreshments:
If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:
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@lga.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

Attendance:
Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:
Alexander Reid
alexander.reid@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.

Local Government Association

Culture, Tourism & Sport Board – Membership

[Click here for accessible information on membership]

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Cllr Peter Golds CBE (Deputy Chair)	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Victoria Wilson	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Gary Ridley	Coventry City Council
Cllr Phil Seeva	Cornwall Council
Cllr Bradley Thomas	Wychavon District Council
Cllr Rebecca Poulsen	Bradford City Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Chris Dey	Enfield London Borough
Cllr David Jeffels	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Neil Jory	West Devon Borough Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Shabir Pandor (Deputy Chair)	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Michael Graham	Wakefield City Council
Cllr Afrasiab Anwar	Burnley Borough Council
Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Becky Gittins	Coventry City Council
Cllr Jemima Laing	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Kelly Middleton	Telford and Wrekin Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Lewis Allison	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Luthfur Rahman	Manchester City Council
Cllr Jonathan Simpson MBE	Camden London Borough Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (Chair)	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Chris White	City and District of St Albans
Substitutes	
Cllr Sean MacLeod	Lewes District Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Geoff Knight (Vice-Chair)	Lancaster City Council
Cllr Julie Jones-Evans	Isle of Wight Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Natalie McVey	Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr James Hall	Swale Borough Council

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18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 21 June 2023, 10.30 am, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Document is Restricted

Local Government Association
2023 Spring Budget Briefing
15 March 2023

The 2023 Spring Budget outlines the Government's spending plans by setting budgets for each central government department. The full set of documents is available on the Treasury website.

The LGA has published a media statement responding to the announcements.

Key messages

- It is good that the Chancellor has used the Spring Budget to act upon council calls for funding and measures to widen employment support, improve local roads, protect swimming pools from rising costs and funding for vital regeneration efforts. Lower borrowing rates for councils will also provide a boost for vital council housebuilding projects.

- Given this is a 'back-to-work' Budget, it is disappointing there were no announcements of further investment in adult social care, public health and children's services, which also play a vital role in supporting economic growth and helping people back into work, alongside boosting people's health and wellbeing.

- A third round of levelling up funding will give councils the opportunity to forge ahead with ambitious plans to transform their communities and unlock potential for more local growth. However, we remain clear that levelling up should be locally led by evidence of where crucial investment needs to go to, not based on costly competitive bids between areas. We recently published our Levelling Up Locally inquiry report which looks into how the Government's levelling up agenda might better strengthen local communities.

- The Chancellor's commitment to transfer responsibilities from Local Enterprise Partnerships to local authorities from April 2024 provides a helpful timeline for councils and combined authorities and we look forward to seeing the updated policy position confirming next steps. This needs to be supported by a commitment from Government that transfers of responsibility are matched by sufficient funding and a commitment to work with the sector to identify any capacity issues some areas may face.

- It is positive news that the Government is addressing workforce participation as part of a wider effort to tackle high vacancy rates affecting both the national economy and local communities. Every local economy is different, and people can find themselves 'economically inactive' for different reasons. With control over fragmented and disjointed national employment and skills funding or schemes, councils could build on their track record of helping get people back into the workplace - including those who are furthest from the jobs market - and plugging growing skills gaps. The LGA's Work Local provides a positive, place based vision for an integrated and devolved employment and skills service that can support

Briefing

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everyone with the wraparound support that is needed.

- We are pleased that the Government has listened to our urgent calls for investment in the early years and tackling the barriers facing people on universal credit to access good quality childcare. Councils have a duty to ensure sufficiency of local provision and so they will need to be given a key role in making sure they succeed. Delivering on today's announcements will also require significant investment into the workforce and early years' facilities. In addition, we need to ensure that there is the right support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Adequate funding, skilled early years practitioners and wider system support are essential to the early identification of need and support for children with SEND, as set out in the Government's own SEND and Alternative Provision improvement plan.

- The LGA has long been calling for support for leisure centres and public swimming pools, so the announcement of £60 million of support for public swimming pools across England is welcome. It is recognition of the importance of our pools to the nation's health, our communities and the safety of our children. This funding will enable councils to keep the doors open and continue the transformation of our pools to an energy efficient future. We look forward to working with the Government and Sport England to ensure support reaches all those in need. Whilst this funding is welcome, we continue to highlight that we should move away from piecemeal pots of funding allocated through competitive bidding processes.

- Alongside sustainable long-term investment in local services, bringing power and resources closer to people is also key to improving lives and building inclusive growth across the country, and many more places are ambitious to follow in the footsteps of the devolution trailblazers which are a positive step towards more local decision-making. It is therefore positive that the Government aims to further roll out the single place-based funding settlements. However, it is important that councils of all sizes are engaged in the devolution process.

- It is also good that the decision to refocus Investment Zones has seen a move away from costly competition between areas towards a transparent selection methodology that goes with the grain of devolution and prioritises the UK's path towards net zero.

- The Government is bringing forward a new discounted Public Work Loans Board (PWLB) policy margin to support local authorities borrowing for Housing Revenue Accounts and the delivery of social housing. This will provide much-needed additional support for vital council housebuilding projects. However, this will not mitigate the impact of the Government's 7 per cent social rent cap for 2023/24. The Chancellor also missed a key opportunity to give councils the power to set their own Right to Buy discounts and retain 100 per cent of sales receipts. This would have gone some way to supporting councils to replace much needed social homes.

- As part of the Government's mission to improve roads, it is helpful that councils are seeing an uplift in their pothole repair funding to meet some of this cost, although challenges remain if they are to tackle the nine year long road repair backlog.

- We want to work with the Government on a long-term funding plan which ensures councils have adequate resources to deliver local services for our communities. Alongside sustainable long-term investment in local services, bringing power and resources closer to people is also key to improving lives and building inclusive growth across the country, and many more places are ambitious to follow in the footsteps of the devolution trailblazers which are a positive step towards more local decision making.

Spring Budget in detail

Public spending

The Chancellor announced that:

- The OBR expects inflation to fall from its peak of 10.7% in Q4 2022 to 2.9% in Q4 2023, a fall of over two-thirds. Inflation in 2023 as a whole is expected to be 6.1%, 1.2 percentage points lower than in the OBR's November forecast. *(Page 14, paragraph 1.11)*

- The OBR then expects inflation to fall to 0.9% in 2024 and to remain near 0.0% until mid-2026. Inflation is then forecast to return sustainably to the 2% target by 2027-28. *(Page 14, paragraph 1.12)*

- The UK economy is now expected to avoid a recession in 2023. Despite avoiding a recession, economic conditions remain challenging in the short term. *(Page 18, paragraph 1.26)*

- The Spring Budget includes an additional £3.1 billion a year by 2024-25 rising to £5.2 billion at the end of the forecast period to help get more people into employment. *(Page 31, paragraph 2.6)*

- As a result of this overall approach to public spending, total departmental spending (DEL) will grow in real terms at 4% a year on average over this Spending Review period. *(Page 32, paragraph 2.9)*

- Planned departmental resource spending for the years beyond the current Spending Review period (2025-26 to 2027-28) will follow the cash profile set out at Autumn Statement, with new commitments, including on labour markets and defence, funded in addition to this. This will see overall resource spending continue to grow at 1% a year in real terms on average. Departmental capital spending will follow the cash profile agreed at the Autumn Statement 2022, with new commitments, including defence, funded in addition to this. *(Page 81, paragraph 4.10)*

Borrowing

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will bring forward a new discounted PWLB policy margin to support local authorities borrowing for Housing Revenue Accounts and the delivery of social housing *(Page 98, paragraph 4.135)*

LGA view

- Lower borrowing rates for councils will provide much-needed additional support for vital council housebuilding projects.

Business rates

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government is publishing a summary of responses to the Business Rates Review technical consultation, which closed in February 2022. This reconfirms the Government's commitment to the Non-Domestic Rating reform package and sets out further detail on how this will be delivered in response to stakeholder feedback *(Page 89, paragraph 4.66).*

- The Government is publishing a consultation on providing ratepayers with more information on business rates valuations. The consultation seeks to gather further views and understand any concerns on how this might work in practice for ratepayers, while balancing the need to protect data and confidentiality *(Page* 89*, paragraph 4.67)*

- The Government is publishing the summary of responses to its consultation and impact assessment on the design of the Digitalising Business Rates (DBR) programme. This document outlines the Government's response to the feedback received which includes a reduction in scope, new legislation to deliver DBR, and an integrated system for ratepayers to interact with central government *(Page 89, paragraph 4.68)*

- Recognising concerns raised by stakeholders during the Business Rates Review, the Government will ensure that revenue is protected by consulting on measures to combat business rates avoidance and evasion. *(Page 89, paragraph 4.69)*

- A long term commitment to local authorities retaining 100 per cent of their business rates, and include a commitment to provide these MCAs with single multi-year funding settlements at the next Spending Review *(Page 96, paragraph 4.118)*

- The Government intends to expand the local retention of business rates to more areas in the next Parliament and will work closely with interested councils to achieve this. The Government also remains committed to bringing forward wider proposals to improve the local government finance landscape in the next Parliament. DLUHC will set out further details in due course *(Page 96, paragraph 4.119)*

LGA view

- We welcome the Government's commitment to legislate on business rates. We look forward to clarification on when it will introduce the Non-Domestic Rating Bill, which was announced in May 2022.

- We will be responding to the consultation on providing ratepayers with further information on business rates valuation. It is very important that a mechanism is found to provide information to billing authorities to enable councils to produce correct and timely business rates bills and to improve the administration of the tax.

- We will continue to engage with the Government on Digitalising Business Rates. Any additional costs for councils should be assessed through a New Burdens Assessment and be fully funded. We welcome the Government's commitment to consult on measures to combat business rates avoidance and evasion.

- The LGA estimated in 2019 that this costs at least £250 million a year in lost revenue. We will be engaging with this consultation and encouraging the Government to introduce measures along the lines of those enacted in Scotland and Wales.

- Business rates could also be improved by:

    - Giving councils more flexibility on business rates reliefs such as charitable and empty property relief.
    - A review of exemptions such as where business happen to be located on farms.
    - Giving councils the ability to set its own business rates multiplier, or at the very least be able to set a multiplier above and below the nationally set multiplier.
    - Bringing forward changes in the basis of liability so that more is defined in statute; how this is framed should be the subject of a further consultation involving the LGA and councils. This is because many fundamental concepts such as beneficial occupation have been set by case law leading to results which may seem puzzling to the public, such as the fact that large vacant sites may not pay business rates.

- We continue to make the case for multi-year settlements and for more long-term certainty around funding for all councils.

- When work on further business rates retention commences it needs to include finding a mechanism so that councils do not have to maintain current levels of business rates provisions to deal with possible appeals.

- We look forward to working with the Government on proposals to improve the local government finance landscape in the next Parliament. This needs to include the Review of Relative Needs and Resources which should include consideration of both the data and the formulas used to distribute funding. There needs to be full engagement with the sector on this.

- The Government also needs to ensure that overall local government funding is sufficient to ensure no council sees its funding reduce as a result of the Fair Funding Review and that transitional arrangements are in place for any business rates reset.

Children's social care

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government is increasing the amount of income tax relief available to foster carers and shared lives carers. The threshold of income at which qualifying carers begin paying tax on care income will be increased to £18,140 per year plus £375 to £450 per person cared for per week for 2023-24 and these thresholds will then be index-linked, representing a tax cut worth approximately £450 per year on average. *(Page 40, paragraph 2.27)*

- To help young people leaving residential care into employment, the Government is providing an additional £8.1 million in each of the next 2 years to expand the Staying Close programme to around half of local authorities by March 2025. Staying Close provides young people leaving residential care with accommodation, and practical and emotional support, as they transition into independent adulthood. *(Page 50, paragraph 3.27)*

LGA view

- Finance should not be a barrier to providing children in care with loving homes. The income tax relief announced today, along with the increase to the National Minimum Allowance announced in the Department for Education's "Stable Homes, Built on Love" strategy, is a welcome announcement that will support foster carers to look after children.

- Staying Close is a positive model for many young people leaving residential care both in relation to education, employment and training, and young people's wellbeing and relationships. Additional funding to enable the programme's expansion is helpful, and we would like to see this developed still further to enable all those leaving residential care to access this programme, where it is right for them.

- However, the support needed by children in care and care leavers to ultimately enter employment will look different according to each young person's needs and should begin well before children leave care.

- We continue to call for children's social care services to be fully funded so that all children in care and care leavers can receive the support they need to thrive into adulthood.

Early education and childcare

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will provide £4.1 billion by 2027-28 to deliver 30 hours a week of free childcare for eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years in England, where eligibility will match the existing 3-4 year old 30 hours offer. This will close the gap between parental leave finishing and the current free childcare offer. To support delivery, the government will also provide £204 million in 2023-24 from September, followed by increases each year, to uplift the funding rate for the existing childcare offers. *(Page 102, paragraph 4.163)*

- The Government will proceed with changing staff-to-child ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two year-olds to align with Scotland and comparable countries, and consult on further measures to improve flexibility for providers. *(Page 102, paragraph 4.163)*

- The Government will increase support for those parents in Great Britain on UC who face the highest childcare costs, often because they are working longer hours, by increasing the UC childcare cost maximum amounts to £951 for one child and £1,630 for two children *(Page 102, paragraph 4.166)*

- The Government will provide upfront support for childcare costs to parents on UC moving into work or increasing their hours in Great Britain rather than in arrears. *(Page 102, paragraph 4.165)*

- The Government will introduce a national pathfinder scheme for wraparound childcare in England, to stimulate supply in the wraparound market and support the ambition that all children should be able to access 8am-6pm childcare provision in their local area. *(Page 102, paragraph 4.164)*

LGA view

- Good quality early education and childcare enables people to work, increase their hours or take on new opportunities, and to move out of poverty. Most importantly it improves families' and children's long-term life chances. We are pleased that the Government has listened to our urgent calls for investment in the early years and tackling the barriers facing people on universal credit to access good quality childcare.

- Raising the universal credit cap on childcare will make a significant difference to many families, as will reforming the system to ensure that parents and carers are not hindered by a complex process to reclaim funding to pay for childcare costs. This is a positive step towards maximising the life chances of all children, regardless of their background, as part of our shared ambition with the Government to level-up communities and reduce inequalities across the country.

- It is helpful that the Government has committed to increasing the hourly funding rate paid to providers to deliver the existing free hours offers in England. To ensure today's announcements have their intended impact, the full cost of delivering early years entitlements must be covered to enable providers to be sustainable, pay staff appropriately and provide high quality support to children in their care. We will be seeking clarification on the extent of the uplift and whether this fully covers costs. It would also be helpful to know how this cost was modelled and how regularly this modelling will be reviewed to ensure providers can deliver the high-quality places that children and parents need.

- Furthermore, we need to secure the right support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Adequate funding, skilled early years practitioners and wider system support are essential to the early identification of need and support for children with SEND, as set out in the Government's own SEND and Alternative Provision improvement plan.

- The Government must recognise that wider reform is needed to ensure a sustainable and affordable early years childcare and education system that works for all families and carers, including those on the lowest incomes, studying or in training. Parents and carers should be able to access provision in a place that works for them and children should have high quality education and care.

- This reform, which brings England into line with Scotland, should not come at the expense of safety and quality, therefore the proposal needs to be monitored. We need to ensure that the benefits of this change are seen by parents with lower carer costs and that it provides greater funding for an already struggling workforce.

- Wraparound childcare is essential to ensuring flexibility for parents and carers to work whilst ensuring children have enriching experiences.

Investment into this area is welcome and concerted effort will be needed to grow the market that can support all children. We call on the Government to work closely with councils on the design and delivery of the pathfinders to ensure that these meet local need.

- Councils' dedicated early years and wraparound childcare teams have faced budget reductions which impact on their ability to carry out vital improvement work with their local early years sector and provide direct support for parents and families. If the Government is to achieve its aim of levelling-up and providing children with the best start in life, councils' early years teams need to be adequately resourced to provide support to their local childcare sector and directly support children and families.

Helping people into employment

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will embed tailored employment support within mental health and MSK services in England, including expanding the well-established and successful Individual Placement and Support (IPS) scheme, […] scaling up MSK hubs in the community […] and also digitise the NHS Health Check to identify and prevent more cases of cardiovascular disease. These measures will support people with long-term health conditions to access the services they need, effectively manage their conditions and feel supported to return to or remain in employment. *(Page 49, paragraph 3.16)*

- The Government will also pilot a new programme, WorkWell, to better integrate employment and health support for those with health conditions, supporting individuals into employment and to remain in work. *(Page 49, paragraph 3.18)*

- The Government is publishing a Health and Disability White Paper. The Work Capability Assessment will be abolished and eligibility for the health top-up in Universal Credit will be passported via the Personal Independence Payment benefit. Claimants will benefit from tailored Work Coach support and be able to try work without fear of losing their benefits. *(Page 49, paragraph 3.19)*

- The Government will introduce a new programme to support people with disabilities and long-term sickness into work. A new Universal Support programme will match individuals in England and Wales who want to work with existing job vacancies, and ensure they are supported to enter and stay in work by funding the necessary training and workplace support. *(Page 49, paragraph 3.21)*

- The Government will extend the Youth Offer. […] Eligibility for the Youth Offer will also be expanded to include young people on Universal Credit who are not currently searching for work, including young parents and carers. *(Page 50, paragraph 3.26)*

- To support young people into employment, the Department for Education will invest an additional £3 million over the next 2 years to pilot an expansion of the Supported Internships programme to young people entitled to Special Educational Needs support who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan. (*Page 57, paragraph 3.62*)

- The Government will expand […] tailored Work Coach support to help claimants of Employment and Support Allowance and the health component of UC to find suitable work. This includes voluntary Work Coach support for individuals who do not currently see Work Coaches *(Page 99, paragraph 4.144)*

- Returnerships will promote accelerated apprenticeships, Sector-Based Work Academy Programme placements and Skills Bootcamps to the over 50s. This will support better access to re-training and allow workers of all ages to engage with the opportunities of a second career. This will be supported by £63 million for an additional 8,000 Skills Bootcamps places in 2024-25 in England, and 40,000 new Sector-Based Work Academy Programme placements across 2023-24 and 2024-25 in England and Scotland. *(Page 57, paragraph 3.64)*

LGA view

- It is good news that the Government is addressing workforce participation as part of a wider effort to address high vacancy rates affecting both the national economy and local communities.

- The LGA's Work Local provides a positive, place-based vision for an integrated and devolved employment and skills service that can support everyone with the wraparound support that is needed for these groups.

- Every area is different, and people find themselves 'economically inactive' for a range of reasons. The new support offered should connect up with councils who may already be in touch with potential beneficiaries. We look forward to working with the Department for Work and Pensions to discuss how to offer effective integrated support.

- Many councils already help people that want to work through their own job support programmes. However, places are unable to use the UK Shared Prosperity to help people back to work until 2024/25. Bridging the gap is critical, as is ensuring Universal Support is well coordinated so that more people can be reached through these new resources.

- Councils have invited nearly 23.5 million eligible people to have an NHS Healthcheck over the last 10 years, of which 11 million have taken up the offer. The NHS Healthcheck is crucial in preventing and identifying potentially life-threatening conditions, and this digital version should if properly integrated, make patients' lives easier and reducing pressure on frontline services.

- Supporting the over 50s back into the workplace with bespoke support is critical, as is making sure new initiatives such as Returnerships join up with Sector-Based Work Academies, Bootcamps and DWP health and career guidance and lead to meaningful, lasting, work.

Employment support programme for Ukrainians

The Chancellor announced that:

- In an extension of the Government's support for Ukrainians fleeing the war who have arrived in the UK under the Ukraine Visa Schemes, the Government is providing £11.5 million to offer intensive English language courses and employment support to up to 10,000 individuals *(Page 57 paragraph 3.66)*

LGA view

- Local authorities have played a key role in welcoming over 165,000 Ukrainians to settle in their new communities. As well as ongoing concerns around homelessness risks, councils have flagged concerns with access to English language lessons for Ukrainians, so additional support is welcome.
- With funding to councils ending after the first year and halving for new arrivals in 2023, we would welcome further clarity on which organisations will be receiving the £11.5 million. We remain keen to work with the Government to share councils' expertise on supporting integration and access to jobs that truly match new arrivals' skills and employment history.

Swimming Pool Support Fund

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will provide over £60 million of support for public swimming pools across England. This will be targeted to address the immediate cost pressures facing public swimming pool providers, as well as providing investment in energy efficiency measures to reform facilities, reduce future operating costs and deliver long-term sustainability. *(Page 82, paragraph 4.18)*

LGA view

- The LGA has long been calling for support for leisure centres and public swimming pools facing rising costs in energy bills. We are pleased the Government has recognised the importance of our public pools to the nation's health, our communities, and the safety of our children.
- Councils and operators have worked hard to keep pools open for as long as possible in the face of rising energy costs but warned that without investment we would have seen a large number of closures. This funding will enable us to keep the doors open and continue the transformation of our pools to an energy secure amd efficient future, with a long-term ambition of maximising the use of renewable and alternative energy sources.
- We look forward to working with the Government and Sport England to ensure support reaches all those in need.
- Whilst this funding is welcome, we continue to highlight that we should move move away from piecemeal pots of funding allocated through competitive bidding processes.

Social housing

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will bring forward a new discounted Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) policy margin to support local authorities borrowing for Housing Revenue Accounts and the delivery of social housing. *(Page 98, paragraph 4.315)*

LGA view

- Lower borrowing rates for councils will provide much-needed additional support for vital council housebuilding projects.

- This will not mitigate the impact of the Government's 7 per cent social rent cap for 2023/24. Councils support moves to keep rents low, but we have warned that the loss of funding would slowdown or halt essential housebuilding projects, key maintenance and improvement works and retrofitting of existing stock in pursuit of Net Zero goals and more energy efficient homes. LGA-commissioned research shows that the 7 per cent cap on social housing rents, compared to the usually permitted Consumer Price Index + 1 per cent limit, will amount to a cumulative deficit to the sector of £664 million after two years.

- Councils remain concerned that this cap will slow down or halt essential housebuilding projects, as well as key maintenance and improvement works and retrofitting of existing stock in pursuit of net zero goals and more energy efficient homes.

- The Budget also missed a key opportunity to give councils the power to set their own Right to Buy discounts and retain 100 per cent of sales receipts. This would have gone some way to supporting councils to replace much needed social homes. Recent analysis commissioned by the LGA showed that without urgent reform to Right to Buy, almost 60,000 homes sold through the scheme will not be replaced by 2030.

Nutrient neutrality and housebuilding

The Chancellor announced that:

- In recognition of the scale of the impact, the Spring Budget announces further support to ensure 'nutrient neutrality' obligations can be efficiently delivered, thereby reducing the risks facing developers building homes in affected areas. DLUHC will shortly launch a call for evidence from Local Planning Authorities, backed by a commitment to provide funding for high quality, locally-led nutrient mitigation schemes *(Page 73, paragraph 3.133)*

- Nutrient neutrality credit schemes – DLUHC will open a call for evidence from local authorities in England for locally led nutrient neutrality credit schemes. Where high quality proposals are identified, this government will provide funding to support clearer routes for housing developers to deliver 'nutrient neutral' sites, in line with their environmental obligations. *(Page 98, paragraph 4.134)*

LGA view

- The LGA's Policy Inquiry on nutrient and water neutrality has flagged the need for urgent short-term action and this additional funding to help unlock housebuilding in nutrient neutrality areas.

- We are pleased that the Government has responded to our concerns with a commitment to funding for locally-led schemes, and will be seeking further information on the amount of funding and when this will be available.

- The call for evidence and additional funding are welcome and must be followed up by doubling-down on long-term action to protect rivers by focusing on reducing pollution at source.

Energy bills discounts

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Energy Bills Discount Scheme will provide all eligible businesses and other non-domestic energy users across the UK with a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024, following the end of the current Energy Bill Relief Scheme. It will also provide businesses in sectors with particularly high levels of energy use and trade intensity with a higher level of support. *(Page 82, paragraph 4.14)*

- The Government is providing UK domestic Heat Network customers on non-domestic heating contracts with a higher rate of relief, set at a level that will ensure that they do not face disproportionately higher energy bills than consumers under the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG). *(Page 82, paragraph 4.17)*

LGA view

- The LGA welcomes the Energy Bills Discount Scheme for eligible businesses and other non-domestic energy users on high energy bills until March 2024 but asks the Government to consider public sector bodies, including councils, as non-domestic energy users.

- Councils are often high energy users, and alongside inflation, wages and the increased cost of service provision, energy prices continue to add additional strain on budgets.

- The LGA welcomes the recognition from the Government that heat network customers on non-domestic heating contracts have been disproportionately impacted by high energy costs due to lower levels of support.

- Ensuring that they do not continue to face disproportionately higher energy bills than consumers under the EPG is welcomed however in the long term, more needs to be done to regulate the sector, increase operational efficiencies and prepare heat networks to become a key contributor to achieving net zero.

Supporting with the increased cost of living

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will adjust the EPG from 1 July to bring charges for comparable direct debit and PPM (prepayment meters) customers into line until April 2024, when the EPG ends. *(Page 82, paragraph 4.15)*

LGA view

- We are pleased by the Chancellor's announcement to remove the premium paid by households using prepayment meters (PPM) by adjusting the EPG.
- Aligning charges with those paying by direct debit is an important step in addressing the higher costs that many low-income and vulnerable households pay for essential goods and services.
- It is positive that the Government is finding ways to make the system fairer for people most at risk from immediate cost of living pressures. To lift people out of poverty for good, we continue to call on the Government to take a cross-departmental and collective approach, working with local government and its partners, to develop long-term solutions to socioeconomic inequality and disadvantage.

Energy Price Guarantee (EPG)

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will maintain the EPG across the UK at £2,500 per year for the typical household for an additional three months (April to June 2023). The planned increase to £3,000 per year will therefore be implemented on 1 July, rather than 1 April as previously announced. *(Page 82, paragraph 4.13)*

LGA view

- The LGA welcomes the extension of the Energy Price Guarantee, it will provide important support ahead of the projected fall in energy prices later in the year. However, as other schemes such as the Energy Bills Support Scheme wind up, lower income households and councils supporting them will remain under some pressure.
- The only way to reduce energy costs in the long run is to reduce energy demand through increased investment in buildings' energy efficiency.

Voluntary and Community Social Enterprise (VCSE)

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will make £10 million available for a grant fund for suicide prevention VCSE organisations in England across 2023-24 to 2024- 25 to support people experiencing suicidal thoughts or approaching a mental health crisis. *(Page 83, paragraph 4.24)*

LGA view

- While the LGA welcomes the investment in VCSE services to prevent suicide, it is important to recognise that suicide prevention efforts are frequently led by local authority public health teams, in partnership with local voluntary services. Current pressures on these services continue to prove challenging in the context of cuts to local public health budgets, which were not helped by the extremely late announcement of the public health grant for 2023/24.

- A one-off grant fund spread across two years for VCSE services will not address these public health funding pressures. An uplift to the Public Health grant is needed, as well as a wider review of the adequacy of public health funding. This will enable Public Health teams to continue their local leadership of suicide prevention and continue to implement long term suicide prevention plans.

Veterans

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government is providing an additional £33 million over the next 3 years to increase the service provided to veterans, including support for those with serious physical injury resulting from their service and increasing the availability of veteran housing*. (Page 81, paragraph 4.7).*

LGA view:

- Additional funding over the next three years to increase the availability of veterans housing is good news for our Armed Forces community. Whilst the funding announced is welcome, it is short-term and limited in nature. Given the other funding pressures local government faces, this means that it cannot fully fund the local capacity needed to sustainably drive forward the Armed Forces Covenant Duty. It is essential that local authorities are involved in the allocation of the funding.

- Councils must also continue to receive enough funding to support veterans and their families across a range of services that affect mental health, including housing, money advice, employment support and other public health and wellbeing services.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government is committed to empowering democratically elected local leaders at every opportunity. To this end, the Government intends for the functions of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to be delivered by local government in the future. Therefore, the Government is minded to withdraw central government support for LEPs from April 2024. DLUHC and the Department for Business and Trade will now consult on these proposals, before confirming a decision. The Government will publish an updated policy position to confirm next steps by the summer. *(Page 70, paragraph 3.119)*

LGA view

- The Levelling Up White Paper announced the integration of LEPs and their business boards into Mayoral Combined Authorities, the Greater London Authority and County Deals where they exist. The Chancellor's commitment to transfer responsibilities from LEPs to local authorities from April 2024 provides a helpful timeline for councils and combined authorities and we look forward to seeing the updated policy position confirming next steps.

- This needs to be supported by a commitment from Government that transfers of responsibility are matched by sufficient funding and a commitment to work with the sector to identify any capacity issues some areas may face.

Investment Zones

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government is launching the refocused Investment Zones programme to catalyse 12 high-potential knowledge-intensive growth clusters across the UK. *(Page 68, paragraph 3.106)*

- English Investment Zones will have access to interventions worth £80 million over five years, including a single five-year tax package for businesses in Investment Zones and grant funding to address local productivity barriers. The Government has invited local partners in eight areas in England to begin discussions on establishing Investment Zones. *(Page 96, paragraph 4.117)*

- Plans will be developed collaboratively by Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) – working in partnership with local universities, councils and businesses – and central government. Plans will need to demonstrate how the Investment Zone will support the UK reaching net zero by 2050 and the Government's new long-term targets to protect and enhance the natural environment, and be resilient to the effects of climate change. (Page 68, paragraph 3.108)

LGA view

- It is good that the decision to refocus Investment Zones has seen a move away from costly competition between areas towards a transparent selection methodology that goes with the grain of devolution and prioritises the UK's path towards net zero.

Levelling up with high-quality regeneration across the UK

The Chancellor announced that:

- The rollout of new Levelling Up Partnerships, providing over £400 million and bringing the collective power of government to provide bespoke place-based regeneration in twenty of England's areas most in need of levelling up over 2023-24 and 2024- 25. *(Page 97, paragraph 4.123)*

- Funding for a further 30 projects across the UK as part of the existing £150 million Community Ownership Fund. *(Page 97, paragraph 4.127)*
- A third round of the Levelling Up Fund will proceed as planned later in 2023 with a further £1 billion to level up places across the UK. *(Page 97, paragraph 4.128)*

LGA view

- A third round of levelling up funding and the extra £400 million for levelling up projects will give councils the opportunity to forge ahead with ambitious plans to transform their communities and unlock potential for more local growth. However, we remain clear that levelling up should be locally led by evidence of where crucial investment needs to go to, not based on costly competitive bids between areas.

Devolution trailblazer deals

The Chancellor announced that:

- In the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government committed to negotiate trailblazer deeper devolution deals with the Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities to set the blueprint for deeper devolution across the rest of England. These deals have now been agreed, subject to ratification, and will equip these authorities with deeper and additional policy levers to deliver on their priorities, including across local transport, employment, housing, innovation and net zero. This includes a greater role in simplifying and integrating ticketing in local transport systems; devolution of the majority of 19+ adult skills funding to mayors; a long-term commitment to local authorities retaining 100 per cent of their business rates; and, for the first time outside of London, local leaders will now be able to set the strategic direction over the Affordable Housing Programme in their areas. *(Page 69, paragraph 3.115)*
- As part of the trailblazer deeper devolution deals, the Government has committed to give Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities single multi-year funding settlements at the next Spending Review. These settlements will be agreed directly with Government through a single process and will cover their funding for devolved policy areas, including local growth and place, local transport, housing and regeneration, adult skills and retrofitting buildings to drive decarbonisation, for the duration of each Spending Review period. The single funding settlements will give the trailblazer MCAs the flexibility and independence they need to deliver for their areas while providing assurance of MCA performance through a single outcomes-based accountability framework. The Government's ambition is to roll this model out to all areas in England with a devolution deal and a directly elected leader over time. *(Page 70, paragraph 3.116)*

LGA view

- Levelling up is at the heart of what councils and combined authorities want for their communities. Alongside sustainable long-term investment in local services, bringing power and resources closer to people is the key to improving lives and building inclusive growth across the country.

- Many more places are ambitious to follow in the footsteps of the pioneering work of the two devolution trailblazers and the positive steps they have made towards more local decision-making.

- It is positive that the Government aims to further roll out the single place-based funding settlements. This recognises the need to move away from the current fragmented funding approach which has been costly and inefficient for local government. We urge the Government to provide clarity on the timelines for this, and to work with local government so that areas that want to go further and faster can do so.

Devolution deals

The Chancellor announced that:

- Last year, the Government made significant progress towards its 2030 devolution mission, signing 6 devolution deals. The Government is fully committed to these deals and seeing the first elections in May 2024. The Government's ambition is to see devolution extended further across England, beyond the areas named in the Levelling Up White Paper. In taking forward this ambition the Government will seek to negotiate a new wave of devolution deals over the coming year, which will include local investment funding for areas that are committed to a mayor or directly elected leader. *(Page 70, paragraph 3.118)*

LGA view:

- The Government's ambition to extend devolution across England is welcome. We have long argued that decisions are best taken as close as possible to the communities they affect, and evidence shows that devolution leads to better outcomes. However, it is important that councils of all sizes are engaged in the devolution process.

- It is important that these new devolution deals are locally-led, and reflect the range of options set out in the devolution framework in the Levelling Up White Paper.

- Areas should be free to choose the most appropriate model for their community, and non-metropolitan areas should not be prevented from pursuing devolution if they have a clear proposition informed by good governance principles.

Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS)

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will also provide up to £20 billion funding for early deployment of CCUS, to help meet the Government's climate commitments. A shortlist of projects for the first phase of CCUS deployment will be announced later this month. Further capture projects will be able to enter a selection process for Track 1 expansion to be launched this year, and 2 additional clusters will be selected through a

Track 2 process, with details announced shortly. *(Page 93, paragraph 4.99)*

LGA view

- The LGA broadly welcomes the commitment to early deployment of CCUS.

- This should not be at the expense of investing in renewables or reducing the amount of energy we as a nation are using.

- Government must consider seriously the workforce and skills requirements to deliver CCUS investments and should enable local government to bring together public and private partners to develop the necessary skills pipeline.

Great British Nuclear (GBN)

The Chancellor announced that:

- Great British Nuclear will launch the first staged competition for Small Modular Reactors with an ambition to select the leading technologies by the end of this year and if demonstrated to be viable we will co-fund this new technology for the UK. Nuclear energy will also be included in the green taxonomy, subject to consultation, encouraging private investment. Small Modular Reactors will be the initial focus of GBN, but further Gigawatt-scale projects will also be considered in future. *(Page 94, paragraph 4.101)*

LGA view

- It is critical to have robust community engagement and support for projects involving nuclear power, whether they are small modular reactors or large reactors.

- As local leaders rooted in communities, the Government and industry must engage with councils and their communities as early as possible on proposals to develop nuclear facilities in their area.

Potholes

The Chancellor announced that:

- In addition, to boost infrastructure investment that is crucial to local communities and businesses, the Government will invest a further £200 million in 2023/24 to maintain and improve local roads. This increase will enable local authorities in England to fix more potholes, complete resurfacing, and invest in major repairs and renewals, such as keeping bridges and major structures open. *(Page 73, paragraph 3.135)*

LGA view

- The LGA has highlighted that the impact of inflation and material shortages was increasing the cost of repairing potholes, making it even more challenging for councils to maintain our local roads.

- It is helpful then that councils are seeing an uplift in their pothole repair funding to meet some of this cost. Challenges remain to tackle the nine-year long road repair backlog.

- Despite the efforts of councils, which repair a pothole every 19 seconds, our local roads repair backlog is rising, with latest estimates showing it would take over £12 billion and ten years to clear.

Transport

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government is committing £8.8 billion for a second round of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for English city regions to transform their local transport networks, covering the period 2027/28 to 2031/32. *(Page 97, paragraph 4.122)*

LGA view

- This announcement is for funding that is set to begin in four years' time. It is a signal of intention.

- The long-term certainty and flexibility of funding that comes with the CRSTS should be extended to all areas.

Theatre, orchestra and museums and galleries tax reliefs

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will continue to support the UK's world-leading creative industries by reforming the audiovisual tax reliefs into expenditure credits with a higher rate of relief than under the current system. The expenditure threshold for high-end TV will remain at £1 million per hour. The Government will also extend the temporary higher rates of theatre, orchestra, and museums and galleries tax reliefs for 2 further years from April 2023. *(Page 61, paragraph 3.76)*

LGA view

- We are pleased the Government has listened to calls to extend the temporary higher rates of theatre, orchestra, and museums and galleries tax reliefs. Cultural organisations are facing significant challenges as a result of rising energy and other costs and the long-term impact of the pandemic. Tax reliefs have been particularly useful for those local authority museums which are operated by a trust or other charitable entity.

- Removing the sunset clause on the Museums and Galleries Exhibitions Tax Relief (MGETR) would provide longer term certainty.

- We welcome the commitment to supporting the UK's creative industries. The creative industries are a key driver of local growth found in over 700 micro clusters across the country. Local authorities have an important role to play in setting the local context for growth and diversifying access to careers in this sector.

Alcohol duty reform

The Chancellor announced that:

- The Government will legislate to make changes to the duty structure for alcoholic products, creating standardised tax bands based on alcohol by volume. The Government will also introduce two new reliefs and transitional arrangements for certain wine products. These changes will take effect from 1 August 2023. *(Page 91, paragraph 4.83)*

LGA view

- We look forward to the details of this announcement which should reflect the LGA's call for duty rates to be linked to alcohol strength. This will help encourage the market for alcohol free and lower strength cider, wine, beer and spirits.

- Charging duty rates based on the strength of a drink will help to reverse the current system which results in the strongest, most harmful drinks sold in supermarkets and off-licences being the cheapest available, which is harming the nation's health as well contributing to alcohol-related crime and disorder on the streets of towns and cities.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The Chancellor announced that:

- Leading by example by pursuing accelerated transfer of the £364 billion Local Government Pension Scheme assets into pools to support increased investment in innovative companies and other productive assets. The Government will shortly come forward with a consultation. *(Page 64, paragraph 3.82)*

- The Government is challenging the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales to move further and faster on consolidating assets – a forthcoming consultation will propose LGPS funds transfer all listed assets into their pools by March 2025, and set direction for the future. This may include moving towards a smaller number of pools in excess of £50 billion to optimise benefits of scale. While pooling has delivered substantial benefits so far, progress needs to accelerate to deliver and the Government stands ready to take further action if needed. The Government will also consult on requiring LGPS funds to consider investment opportunities in illiquid assets such as venture and growth capital, thereby seeking to unlock some of the £364 billion of LGPS assets into long-term productive assets. *(Page 95-96, paragraph 4.116)*

- The Government will increase the Annual Allowance from £40,000 to £60,000 from 6 April 2023. Individuals will continue to be able to carry forward unused Annual Allowances from the 3 previous tax years. The Government will increase the Money Purchase Annual Allowance from £4,000 to £10,000 and the minimum Tapered Annual Allowance from £4,000 to £10,000 from 6 April 2023. The adjusted income threshold for the Tapered Annual Allowance will also be increased from £240,000 to £260,000 from 6 April 2023. The Government will also remove the Lifetime Allowance charge from 6 April 2023, before fully abolishing the Lifetime Allowance in a future Finance Bill. The maximum Pension Commencement Lump Sum for those without protections will be retained at its current level of £268,275 and will be frozen thereafter. *(Page 100, paragraph 4.153)*

LGA view

- The promised consultation is eagerly awaited by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as we anticipate further clarification of Government's expectations around LGPS investments and future direction of the pooling agenda. The LGA, as the host for the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board Secretariat, will be fully involved in considering the consultation when it is published, and assisting the Board to respond to the consultation.

- The changes to pension tax limits relating to the Lifetime and Annual Allowances (LTA and AA respectively) will be welcomed by higher earners in the LGPS, as well as those middle-lower earners with long local government careers who were beginning to be pulled into AA despite the tax being understood to be aimed at those building up excessive pension benefits.

- The changes to pension tax limits may assist some older workers to remain in the workforce longer than they may otherwise have planned to, given the implications of pensions tax prior to these proposed changes. However, it should be remembered that the majority of LGPS members will not be affected by the pension tax changes, and that the average LGPS pension in payment is around £5 thousand per annum.

- The increase to the Money Purchase Annual Allowance (MPAA) will allow those LGPS members paying additional voluntary contributions into a defined contribution pension pot to increase those contributions should they be able to and wish to.

Meeting: Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Date: 22 March 2023

Fan led review of football governance

Purpose of report

For information

Summary

The Government has responded to the Fan led review of football governance, conducted by Tracey Crouch MP in 2021. This report outlines the key elements of the response.

The review and proposals do not directly affect local government, but local clubs are a significant asset and influencer in communities so the LGA has maintained a watching brief on the review. Several LGA members have also committed to the Fair Game initiative and have asked the LGA to support reforms.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That the Board:

- Notes the report
- Commits to keeping a watching brief on developments
- Notes forthcoming LGA work on community engagement in sport

Contact details

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Fan led review

Background

1. The Government's 2019 manifesto commitment to deliver a fan-led review of football governance, in light of the failings at historic clubs such as Bury and Macclesfield Town which went out of business as a result of mismanagement. Those clubs are among 64 instances of a club being put into administration since 1992, when the Premier League was launched.

2. There also continues to be serious financial risk in the leagues. Despite the global success of English football, the combined net debt of clubs in the Premier League and Championship had reached £5.9 billion by the end of the 2020/21 season.

3. In the same season, the Championship reported a wage-to-revenue ratio average of 125 per cent - meaning clubs were stretching themselves far beyond their means - and in recent months multiple clubs throughout the leagues have failed to meet their payroll. Derby County FC found itself on the brink of liquidation last year, and indications are that things continue to deteriorate across the leagues.

4. Tracey Crouch's Fan Led Review of Football governance report was based on engagement with supporters' trusts, fan groups, women's football representatives, football authorities, club owners, players representatives, and underrepresented interest groups, alongside over 20,000 fans responding to an online survey.

5. The final report, supported by an expert advisory panel from the world of football, was submitted to the Government in November 2021, with 57 recommendations put forward in total, including ten key strategic recommendations.

6. It concluded that football requires a strong, independent regulator to secure the future of our national game, and found a significant part of the reason for the perilous state of football was due to reckless financial decision-making often being prioritised by unsuitable owners and directors in the pursuit of glory, putting the future of clubs - and their status as community assets - at risk.

Government response

7. The Government first responded to the review in April 2022. On 22 February 2023, it announced a series of measures which will respond to key recommendations in the review.

8. These include:

   8.1. A new independent regulator to help prevent repeat of financial failings seen at Derby County, Bury and Macclesfield Town
   8.2. A strengthened owners' and directors' test to protect clubs and their fans from unscrupulous owners, including stronger due diligence on sources of wealth and a requirement for robust financial planning
   8.3. Fans given greater say in running of clubs, and key heritage such as team names, badges and stadia at core of new plan
   8.4. Powers to block English clubs from joining unpopular breakaway leagues like the European Super League

9. The new independent regulator for the men's elite game will be established in law to oversee the financial sustainability of the game and put fans back at the heart of how football is run.

10. They will implement a new licensing system from the top flight down to the National League, requiring clubs to demonstrate sound financial business models and good corporate governance as part of an application process before being allowed to compete.

11. It will also guarantee fans a greater say in the strategic running of their clubs and help protect clubs' heritage to stop owners changing names, badges and home shirt colours without consulting fans. It will require clubs to seek regulator approval for any sale or relocation of the stadium, with fan engagement a major part of that process.

12. There are no direct implications for councils from these proposals. However, many councils are considering how they can improve community engagement and involvement with their own sport services and facilities. In 2019, the LGA published a guide for grassroots sports organisations on how to work effectively with local government.

13. This work is now being further developed as part of the legacy briefings from Securing the future of public sport and leisure services, which identified community ownership and asset transfer as an important part of the facilities mix in the future.

14. The draft briefing is included in Annex A. Subject to clearance from the Board, it will enter the proofing and design process and, on publication, will be accompanied by a number of illustrative case studies.

Implications for Wales

15. The review and response relates to England only. However, the LGA's work on community ownership and engagement is applicable to Welsh authorities.

Financial Implications

16. This work has been delivered within existing budgets.

Equalities implications

17. The wider reforms include measures to make football more inclusive, with particular action to remove barriers to professionalisation in women's football. The emphasis on support involvement in governance, should promote greater local connections, although will not in itself tackle the challenges of improving inclusion in football.

Next steps

18. The LGA team will adapt and publish the briefing in Annex A.

Supporting community ownership of leisure and sport assets

1. Introduction

While, devolving power to communities and community ownership in itself is not a new idea, it has firmly been on the Government's agenda for the past ten years, firstly with the Localism Act (2012) which established the Right to Bid among other community rights.

More recently, the Government has launched several policy initiatives to support communities to take back control. These include:

- levelling Up speaks of the need to 'empower communities'
- the £150m Community Ownership Fund seeks to support communities take ownership of local assets at risk of closure
- the Government's fan led review of football governance makes recommendations for greater 'voice and influence' for supporter communities at their respective clubs such as giving protective rights over actions such as the sale of their stadium

So, the national policy direction has been set. But what does this mean for communities and councils and how can the benefits be maximized for all?

Council provided sport and leisure services continue to grapple with the impacts from COVID-19, the current energy and cost of living crises and increases to the National Living Wage- is putting our national sporting infrastructure on a knife edge.

Leisure providers report energy bills have fluctuated by 300 per cent since 2019.

Recent data from ukactive data shows that since October 2022, 350 facilities have had to restrict services or temporarily or permanently close their doors. It also indicates that without urgent support, 31 per cent of councils are at risk of losing their leisure centre(s) and pool(s) or seeing reduced services from 1 April 2023.

As councils look to 'secure the future of public sport and leisure services' and to re-evaluate and re-design the way in which these services are funded and delivered, this briefing considers the powerful benefits of community owned leisure and sport assets offers to communities and councils. It takes a practical look at how councils can support community ownership of leisure and sports assets and shares learning from councils who are making progress in this area. It builds upon other briefings in the series, including 'Identifying additional financing options for public leisure services'.

2. What it is

Community assets

My community describes community assets or space as "buildings or land which are used for the well-being or social interest of the local community. These may include parks and open green spaces, libraries, cinemas and other cultural spaces, swimming pools and other leisure facilities, community centres, youth centres, nurseries or pubs."

Community Ownership

"Community ownership ensures that local people have control over the buildings and spaces that have significance to them and that these spaces are used in ways that meet the priorities and needs of the local community."

Assets can be brought into community ownership through several routes giving local people control to use these assets in ways that meet the priorities and needs of the local community. These include direct ownership without shares, direct ownership via community shares and indirect ownership.

3. Making the case

Community ownership is a powerful tool. It harnesses the collective capacity, skills and innovation in communities and directs these towards achieving outcomes that are beneficial to the local community and can also help meet councils' priorities. Social value is created through the retention of public spaces and services.

It can help build more resilient communities, establish the real needs of communities, empower, and upskill local people. These benefits have become more relevant in the wake of COVID-19 as councils help communities to bounce back from the pandemic and support them through the current cost of living crisis.

Community ownership can support councils to meet a range of priorities particularly around improving the uptake of discretionary services by rooting them deeper in the community. In the case of sport and leisure assets this can lead to increases in participation rates and improved physical activity levels and mental wellbeing. It can also reach groups who might experience barriers to accessing these services when delivered in more traditional formats.

Services tend to be more responsive to need and demand the closer they are to the users who require them. This means community-managed or owned facilities can sometimes develop new and more effective ways of delivering the service. They can also secure a more diverse set of funding streams than a council, both through local fundraising and through larger philanthropic funders.

As a byproduct it may help to alleviate financial pressures on the service. While this may act as a prompt to consider transferring assets, the case for community asset ownership should be determined by the economic, social, and environmental benefits and not simply on a commercial basis.

Empowering local communities through asset ownership is an increasingly relevant option, as is aligning community needs and council priorities with the comprehensive network of asset owning community sports organisations.

Councils have a key role to play in helping communities to take ownership of local assets and creating a local network capable of delivering services, whilst protecting the local sport and leisure landscape.

Jubilee swimming pool is an 85-year-old pool in Bristol. In September 2022 it became the first in the city to come under community-ownership after local volunteers stepped in to keep the pool open. Bristol City Council completed a Community Asset Transfer lease with the Friends of Jubilee Pool (Bristol) Ltd. The new charitable organisation will take over the responsibility for managing Jubilee Pool under a 35-year lease and plan to work with local people to improve the much-loved community facility.

4. Benefits and challenges

Benefits

Community ownership has the potential to provide solutions to some of the issues currently facing sport and leisure services. However, it is not a one size fits all approach and nor can it resolve all the issues but it can be another tool to consider as you think about the future of the service.

Having ownership of a sport and leisure asset in your community can help support your services'/councils' priorities in the following ways:

1. Protects key local sport and leisure services used by communities and by the NHS. Protects facilities that may otherwise be lost and fall into disrepair and attract maintenance and security costs..
2. Provides a physical base for the provision of affordable and accessible local sport and leisure services.
3. Allows generation of income that can be re-invested locally.
4. Protects jobs that are at risk from facility closures. Provides training and business opportunities.
5. Can reverse economic decline of an area and attract investment. Can act as leverage, enabling further investment to be negotiated.
6. Enables more intensive use of assets and services when control is closer to the community. Encourages groups who may not have used traditionally run assets to participate.
7. Can increase participation - membership, volunteering, attendance at meetings and also drive up participation rates and physical activity levels. .
8. Instils a renewed sense of pride and confidence in the community. Provides local people with a meaningful stake in the future development of the place in which they live and / or work and builds long-term support from the community.

9. Creates an incentive to invest in the building to reduce running costs - e.g. energy efficiency.
10. Skills and capacity are developed locally because of taking on and managing a building. Attracts new people with additional skills.

In the following sections we will explore the wider benefits of community ownership in more detail.

Social value

"Social value is a broader understanding of value. It moves beyond using money as the main indicator of value, instead putting the emphasis on engaging people to understand the impact of decisions on their lives. The people's perspective is critical." (Social Value UK)

The community ownership model and its governance arrangements incorporates various characteristics that generate social value. These include:

- Social objectives are embedded in their governing rules
- The board should be representative of the communities it represents
- Transparency and accountability provides 'check and balance' mechanisms to help ensure they work for wider benefit
- People's involvement is often to meet a local need

The focus is on being sustainable through the provision of activities and services for local people that underpins the business model, capturing social value as a result.

Supporter ownership of spectator sports clubs and social value

The enhanced social value created from community ownership of spectator sports clubs has been discussed and evidenced to great extent including in Supporters Direct The Social and Community Value of Football report (2010). Supporter ownership creates greater local control, transparency and confidence to local stakeholders not least to supporters and councils that the club is being run for benefit beyond a small and often unrepresentative group of shareholders.

Councils' recognition of a club's local value and support for community ownership is often activated when a club is in financial trouble with key assets such as the stadium at risk. A more progressive approach could be to support community ownership when the club is not at risk and to create a partnership that can support the council deliver wider policy objectives. A great example is with Chesterfield FC where Chesterfield Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council lent money to the club's charitable trust for it to take majority control of the club.

Not for profit – retaining value locally

The rules governing many community owned / voluntary community sector (VCS) structures ensure profits are reinvested to deliver community benefit such as employing local people and supporting local businesses.

Profits can be re-invested to benefit local communities in various ways. Whether that be a 'non for profit' leisure provider re-investing in infrastructure, sports clubs applying surpluses for concessionary user rates or a community owned football club ensuring it has reserves for a rainy day (or a relegation) to ensure its long-term survival. A long-term outcome of this is the generation of local economic value and reassurance for councils investing in community ownership that it will deliver local benefits.

Procurement practices can help to retain local value. For example, the Public Services (Social Value) Act (2013) requires all public sector organisations and their suppliers to look beyond the financial cost of a contract to consider how the services they commission and procure can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area. This can include improving wellbeing of individuals, communities and the environment by making social value a decision-making criterion when awarding contracts. This helps to keep money being contained/spent within the local economy, creating a multiplier effect as more money circulates within a local economy, generating income for local people. The LGA has produced a number of support tools to develop their social value commissioning practices.

Generating economic value

Giving communities an ownership stake in an organisation's success can generate various financial benefits. It encourages local usage and patronage, can reduce operational costs and if they have charitable status it will create benefits such as tax relief. A stronger local economy can also be a legacy of localism and 'levelling up' agendas.

There are various scales of resources needed. For example, at the smaller end of the scale voluntary management and community ownership models can reduce operating costs and can increase the skills and capability of local people and the organisation. Enlisting volunteers to support local assets that have low to no revenue stream but are nevertheless valued locally can help create a sustainable business model. Key to this is to ensure the community organisation has the capability and local communities have sufficient 'buy in' to help make it work.

But, as the scale of the proposition increases, an employee-based model is required, however other benefits of community ownership remain. If the potential social and economic benefits are to be taken advantage of the model needs to be run effectively with a 'business orientated' culture.

Enterprising and progressive culture with greater flexibility

'Not for profit' status does not mean a 'non-business' orientated culture. If a community organisation has the right structure, attracts the right people and is satisfying a need it can create an enterprising culture reaping benefits of community ownership.

An enterprising culture can deliver both economic and social value and cross-subsidies activities to reach groups that may otherwise be excluded because of unaffordable charges.

Bronx Boxing

Bronx Boxing offers heavily subsidised school activities for young people, made possible by offering fitness classes on a more commercial basis. A simple model that provides social value along with a means of generating sufficient revenue. It has recently taken over a redundant building with a lease provided by London Borough of Southwark.

Not all community organisations and enterprises will have an enterprising culture, but it is important to recognise they can. Councils can help by identifying those with potential and supporting them to realise it.

Reducing costs for councils

Despite the financial challenges, councils continue to spend around £1.1 billion per year on sport, leisure, parks, green spaces, pitches, playgrounds and community halls.

As discussed earlier council provided sport and leisure facilities and pools are facing the very real possibility of closures. Councils need to look for different ways to sustain the service. By encouraging and involving greater community ownership, costs can be reduced, whilst safeguarding local sports provision and infrastructure for future generations.

Community ownership does not mean transferring liabilities to the community without due care and attention. It is about understanding how some of the benefits identified can transform a liability into a community asset, owned by an organisation that has alignment with the council.

If a strong business model can be generated from transferring an asset to the community, as long as the community entity has the capability, it can produce a sustainable future under local stewardship. Capital investment may often be required to produce a viable on-going business model.

Access to alternative sources of funding and finance

The traditional sports club is a major part of the sport and leisure delivery system. With about 70,000 clubs in England, it has always offered an alternative financial approach. Club membership offers the means of offering participation in a sustainable way with fees and secondary spend covering running costs. It will continue to be central to local sport and leisure delivery systems, offering value to councils and local communities.

The community asset ownership model offers alternative methods of financing sport and leisure provision beyond traditional club structures. The eligibility for additional sources of grant aid is an obvious method. As is their greater ability to secure donations, which also provides ‘gift aid’ benefits. Crowdfunding platforms offer quick and easy methods of raising funds.

The Sport England Active Together crowdfunding initiative can match fund, up to £10,000 to successful Crowdfunder campaigns from a total pot of £7.5m. It provides expert advice and guidance to support local clubs, organisations, town and parish councils to run their own crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The growth of the social investment market presents opportunities for VCS's accessing finance not available for councils. It also helps address a structural issue for community ownership because they cannot secure finance from equity investment and traditional high street lenders may be reluctant.

As covered in Identifying additional financing options for public sport and leisure services | Local Government Association community owned entities can secure social investment from individuals (community based) and from social investment funds and lenders (institutional).

The social investment seeks to produce a social return as well as financial, helping to steer local sport VCSs towards delivering social outcomes aligned to council policy objectives.

Community shares have been regularly used by community benefit societies to help communities to save and/or takeover local shops and pubs. Its application in sport and leisure has been less prevalent.

Social investment secured from individuals, such as from community shares or loans, can provide tax relief opportunities to the investors. Creating significant incentives for investment to support local community sports assets. However, it is a complex area requiring specialist and costly advice, therefore a barrier for community groups exists.

Challenging community organisations to raise money from their local communities, by donation or investment, is a useful method of gauging their capability along with the level of local support for the asset or service. However, this may be less reliable in light of the cost of living crisis and diminishing levels of disposable income.

VCSs that secure social impact investment from social investment funds and institutions will need to demonstrate they are 'investment ready'. It can provide the required confidence to the council regarding their capability.

The various forms of funding and finance available to VCSs and other community owned social enterprises can create the initial investment and ongoing revenues required to form viable and sustainable business models.

Partnership opportunities

The growth of local sports VCS providers delivering social outcomes creates various partnership opportunities. It offers councils a ready made local delivery system, with providers who already share the council's wider objectives.

The Chances Fund SIB demonstrates how local sports CVSs that use sport as a tool to deliver social outcomes can be a delivery partner for council services such as education and youth services. Demonstrating how the use of funding can help align *their delivery with council policy objectives plus improve a VCS's ability to evaluate the outcomes delivered.*

If a council can support growth of community ownership it can establish a sympathetic local sports and leisure delivery system. One that is driven to deliver sports and physical participation plus use sport as a tool to deliver wider social outcomes.

The partnership between Herefordshire Council and Halo Leisure services provides an example how a long term community owned asset can be created with a strong business case and an inclusive approach. A key element was the Public Works Loan Board loan passed through to Halo Leisure services that enabled the leisure stock modernisation, which generated additional revenue to remove the need for a subsidy.

Challenges

Community ownership of sport and leisure assets is not the solution to the challenges facing council provided sport and leisure services. However it offers an alternative approach that is locally committed. It can also create a 'safety net' when a local asset is at risk by working with local communities to create a new, community orientated business model that is underpinned by local 'buy in'. However, while communities are at the heart of the approach and the reason for so many of the benefits we have already discussed, the success of the approach is only as strong as the skills and capacity within communities. A challenge for councils can be identifying where community asset ownership is a viable option.

Councils therefore have a role to play in supporting communities to develop the skills and knowledge to enable them to flourish. The main challenges preventing communities to undertake community ownership includes:

Finance

- One of the challenges facing most community groups is lack of financial resources. This could include not having or being able to obtain the initial capital to carry out an assessment of the project's feasibility and develop a business plan or they may not have an established track record to support their case.
- having to commit to development costs with the risk of substantial losses as there is no certainty that it will be successful in acquiring the business,
- the difficulty of agreeing a fair valuation for the business, especially when the principal assets are worth more as non-business assets.
- More recently, the rise in energy prices and increasing living costs presents a real threat to the future of many community owned assets, particularly as they are reliant on community support at a time when people have less disposable income to spend.

Councils can help by:

- providing support ‘in kind’ such as access to property management and accounting expertise within the council
- making small grants for initial pre-feasibility and feasibility work
- offering short licenses and leases in the early stages of a transfer, while its viability is being tested
- providing high quality information on the maintenance requirements and costs of the building in question
- recognising the longer timescales that community organisations need to work to, if they are to have the support and involvement of their communities
- offering sale or lease terms that are appropriate and proportionate to the social nature of the organisation, rather than what would suit a profit-making business
- recognising the value of investing initial capital, as this could be the reassurance needed for the project to attract further capital finance from social and private investors
- retaining responsibility for infrequent but core maintenance costs, such as boiler repairs, while transferring day to day running costs.

Skills

- Communities may lack the breadth of key skills needed to undertake ownership of a local asset
- May not be familiar with local authority commissioning processes or how to respond to them.

Councils can help by:

- Provide free or subsidised training in key skills such as finance, volunteer recruitment and management, communications, grant/funding application writing, fundraising skills, procurement, community engagement, evaluation and measuring impact to support applications for future funding.
- Developing a support network for groups to share ideas, resources and good practice
- Ensuring there is an ongoing link between the transferred asset and the council-delivered service, allowing shared actions to tackle inequalities or health issues.

Capacity

- Many individuals in community groups will have other work and commitments that may mean they have less capacity
- Communities face extra challenges of having to act quickly, especially if there is competition to buy the business or its principal assets

Councils can help by:

- Being flexibly and arranging meetings and training at times when individuals who work or have caring or other commitments can attend

- Building in longer deadlines into tender processes to enable community, supporter groups and sports clubs to apply

The path towards community ownership

A small but growing number of councils are looking at community ownership in different areas.

Football is an area where this is growing. A number of councils have passed a motion to become a Fair Game council, demonstrating their belief and commitment that football clubs are community assets that play important social, civic and cultural roles in local communities. The trailblazers are Kendal Town Council, Oldham Borough Council, Barrow-on-Furness Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle City Councils.

Liverpool City Council is working with the Fields in Trust to become the first local authority in the UK to legally protect all of its parks and green spaces forever, ensuring they can never be sold off or built on. This follows the inspirational work a group of parks Friends volunteers who pushed for this to happen.

We've already explored some of the ways in which councils can support community ownership of sports and leisure assets, this section will look at this in more detail.

Community asset transfer

When local assets with community value are at risk it is an obvious time to consider community ownership and how investment can be applied to help make it a realistic option.

A community asset transfer is the transfer of an asset from a public authority to a VCS. It is generally considered to include long term tenure, such as over 25 years or a freehold. The challenge is to ensure it happens in the appropriate circumstances. Other considerations include can community ownership offer a viable solution and does the VCS taking ownership have the required capability.

However, it presents an opportunity for the council to drive improvements in the VCS's capability eg in its governance, financial management and operations. Enhancing the VCS' organisational capability will help to reduce the risk of failure from the asset transfer .

Spikes Bridge, Ealing

Spikes Bridge Park lacked investment and intensive informal use had taken its toll on the facilities. Ealing Council tendered the opportunity to manage the site to London Tigers (an award-winning charity). A 25-year low rent lease along with professional support to secure external investment formed the main terms to regenerate the site. The model has been successfully replicated across many other sites in Ealing.

A community bid to take ownership may not be as ‘oven ready’ as other options. It is important, subject to regulations, that the procurement process recognises that fact. A preferred approach can be working with a community organisation over time to help develop the business case and their capability.

It can provide councils with proof of concept before entering into a long lease for the site. A procurement process can often be a daunting task for many community groups and in many cases the scope and specification can often restrict tenders from community groups.

Capital investment and financing

Councils can support community ownership by providing investment and access to capital such as Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and Section 106 credits. This can be for the provision of new assets or modernising existing assets which may already be in community ownership.

Research by the District Councils Network demonstrates that the leisure estate is not energy efficient and currently accounts for between 10 to 40 per cent of a council’s direct carbon emissions. A key issue will be to refurbish or replace the ageing infrastructure to ensure it meets demand and reduces carbon emissions, helping it to protect the service from future energy prices and to support community owned assets to be successful and sustainable.

Community Ownership Fund

The Government’s Community Ownership Fund runs until 2024/25. It offers grants of up £250,000 (£1 million in exceptional cases for sport and leisure assets) to match with other funding to save local assets by transferring into community ownership. The fund offers development support to help the community organisation grow capability and develop the business case. It can also provide up to £50,000 or up to 20 per cent of the grant in revenue support.

The Community Ownership Fund can support community asset transfers but it should be noted that are there exclusions such as where it involves the delivery of a council service. The criteria is detailed in the fund prospectus.

Any capital investment should be applied to produce long term sustainability of the facility and ‘lock in’ good practices to help ensure profitability and management capability.

Capacity building

Even where a situation exists where there are clear benefits from community ownership of sport and leisure assets. The risk of failure are tangible if the community vehicle does not have the capacity and capability to manage and operate appropriately. They need to be ‘fit for purpose’.

The successful transfer to community asset ownership may require developing skills and resources ie capacity and capability. The task for councils is to help their local VCS’ to get the required support when needed.

There are often local sources of free support, such as training for trustees and managing budgets. Additionally, there are some national programmes to support VCS' to co-create business plans and budgets plus develop the organisational capability, often related to being 'investment ready' for social investment rather than securing asset ownership.

It may be the council can lend capacity at key points by providing time and skills. It maybe able to support the design and procurement processes.

Generating revenue: social value procurement
A method of supporting community ownership of sport and leisure assets is from social value procurement. The social value criteria in procurement can recognise the value of community ownership. It is a tangible method of generating revenue to ensure sustainability, whilst delivering social value.

Commissioning provides a direct mechanism for generating revenue for community sports assets. A council can also help more indirectly by using its local profile and influence.

Sweating the asset: increasing utilisation of sport and leisure assets
The more a facility is used, the more revenue it can generate and therefore becomes a more feasible proposition. Councils can play a role in creating demand and usage.

Linking up groups where needs complement, such as one with a facility and the other requiring space is one method. Signposting and promoting local community assets another. A community asset register is a method where a central depository of available space can be promoted, enabling groups to find the space they require and community asset owners to generate revenue.

Councils hosting networking events can help link VCS to create mutual benefits. Bringing in local businesses to the network provides additional opportunities for revenue generation and creating local value.

These activities and services offer councils a low cost method of indirectly supporting community owned assets, along with establishing a local network of mutual support.

Reducing costs for community assets

Supporting revenue generation of community owned assets directly by commissioning and by indirect means is one method a council can help. As with any business, reducing costs is another way of improving profitability. Councils can play a role here too.

Charities and community amateur sports clubs (CSACs) can claim mandatory rate relief of up to 80 per cent. Some councils may offer an additional 20 per cent discretionary rate relief and offer 'not for profit' sports clubs discretionary rate relief.

Rate relief offers a tool to influence as well as to provide direct financial assistance. Offering additional discretionary rate relief to those delivering social outcomes is a method to encourage greater alignment with council policy objectives. Initial periods

of rate relief when communities take over local community assets is another way to provide support.
A council's ability to offer peppercorn rent for communities with tenure at council owned sites offers another means of providing support.

Ealing Rent Subsidy

Ealing Rent subsidy is a simple tool to reduce annual rents based on outcomes. Like lots of councils they have historical rents. Offering peppercorn rents for many clubs with limited impact, whilst other community clubs pay market rentals. The programme provides criteria, which if satisfied, warrant an 80 per cent reduction in market rent. It rewards and incentivises good behaviour and delivering local impact.

Partnership opportunities

The growth of local sports VCS providers delivering social outcomes creates various partnership opportunities. It offers a local delivery system with mutual objectives to councils and the ability to secure various forms of funding to support delivery.

The Chances Fund Social Investment Bond demonstrates how local sports CVSs that use sport as a tool to deliver social outcomes can be a delivery partner for council services such as education and youth services. Demonstrating how the use of funding can help align their delivery with council policy objectives plus improve a VCS's ability to evaluate the outcomes delivered.

If a council can support growth of community ownership it can establish a sympathetic local sports and leisure delivery system. One that is driven to deliver sports and physical participation plus use sport as a tool to deliver wider social outcomes.

The partnership between Herefordshire Council and Halo leisure services provides an example how a long term community owned asset can be created with a strong business case and an inclusive approach. A key element was the public works loan board loan passed through to Halo Leisure services that enabled the leisure stock modernisation, which generated additional revenue to remove the need for a subsidy.

Community asset ownership offers various partnership opportunities, which can help reduce council costs, deliver policy objectives and protect the local sport and leisure landscape.

6. Picking the winners

A council needs to consider when community sport and leisure asset ownership is a realistic option and what are the potential benefits.

Two questions can be used for a council to review the case for community ownership:

- Whether there is a social and economic case
- Can it provide or lever support to improve the social and economic outcomes to generate the business case?

Assessing opportunities checklist

Aspect
Is there a viable business case to be developed and is community ownership an option?
What social value benefits are possible?
Does it offer the potential for service delivery / deliver council policy objectives?
Can it reduce council costs?
Can it open up new funding and financing sources?
Does it offer partnership opportunities including with service delivery?
Is there a community organisation with current capability / potential?

Supporting community asset ownership

Is a community asset transfer an option?
Does the VCS have capacity building needs?
What resources can a council offer in the short and long term?
Can a council provide any capital funding support?
Can a council directly support revenue generation ?
Can a council indirectly support revenue generation?

7. Top tips

- Understand your local community network and which organisations have greatest potential
- Support the capacity building of local community organisations
- Offer skills support and resources at key points
- Create a hub of community owned assets to share resources, knowledge and generate revenue
- Use financial incentives such as rate relief to encourage social outcome delivery
- Use capital investment to create sustainable business models that deliver social and economic outcomes

8. Summary

Community asset ownership is an option requiring a detailed, evidence based review on a ‘case by case’ basis, that needs to consider both the business case, the communities needs and the VCS’s development needs. It cannot be assumed that a liabilityunder public ownership becomes an asset under community ownership, even with capital investment.

Whilst it is not a panacea for local sport and leisure ownership. Community sports and leisure asset ownership can offer a 'natural' partner for councils, the challenge is to turn the potential into sustainable and impactful solutions that takes the learnings from successful examples elsewhere.

8.Glossary

Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC): Is a sports club that meets eligibltiy requirements and are recognised by HMRC. It provides similar tax benefits to a charity but without the same level of reporting requirements

Community Asset Transfer: Is the transfer of an asset from a public authority to a VCS group. It is generally considered to include long term tenure, such as over 25 years, for the asset.

Community Benefit Society: Community Benefit Societies are a type of cooperative, owned by their members, where the primary beneficiary is the community. Similarly, to other cooperatives they are driven by values and principles such as a democratic and open membership and member participation.

Community Shares: Is a form of raising investment unique to cooperatives, raised by its members to deliver benefit to their community. The shares cannot be traded but can be repaid to the members by the cooperative.

Crowdfunding: Rasing money from a large group of people, generally by internet platforms, that can be used for financially supporting organisations and projects

Gift aid: is a means for an eligible recipient organisation to claim an extra 25p for every pond donated. To be eligible the organisation needs to be a charity or a registered Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC)

Investment ready: The organisation seeking investment has addressed risks such as capability with a tested business and financial case demonstrated

Public Work Loans Board (PWLB): Is statutory body of the UK government that can provide long term lending to public bodies

Social Impact Bonds (SIBs): SIBs are outcome focused contracts that use social investment to provide funding for delivering a service. They are a 'payment by result contract with performance measured and valued in terms of defined outcomes rather than purely the delivery.

Social Impact Investment: Is investment intended to deliver social impact alongside financial returns to the investors.

Social investment: Is investment that seeks to deliver a social as well as financial return.

Meeting:

Date:

CTS Conference 2023

Purpose of report

For decision

Summary

This report outlines the impact of the CTS Conference 2023 and invites members to feedback on their experience as delegates and facilitators.

Members are also invited to provide an early steer to inform thinking about the 2024 conference.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That the CTS Board:

- Provide thoughts and reflections on the day
- Agree that the 2024 conference takes place in March 2024
- Agree that the LGA events team explore Knowsley as the preferred location

Contact details

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CTS Conference 2023

Background

1. The CTS Conference took place as a hybrid event on 15 March 2023. Despite a number of challenging events later being scheduled for the same day – Budget, Teachers Strike, Tube Strike, and Civil Servants Strike – the day was well attended.
2. 85 delegates registered, with 66 attending in person and 39 attending online. The number planning to attend in person was originally higher, but the announcement of the tube strike led to a small number of delegates switching to online attendance. Some presenters also contributed online, while others were in-person.
3. This level of attendance compares well to the last in-person conference in 2020, which had 89 delegates – all in-person as no online option was offered.
4. These numbers are down from 2021, when 714 delegates attended the wholly online events. However, the LGA took the decision to make the event free for that year only, in reflection of the Covid-19 pandemic, and numbers are not expected to reach this level for a paid-for conference.
5. The 2023 event included a tour of the Coliseum, led by the Chair of English National Opera. 13 delegates attended this, although 30 delegates originally booked. This replaced the usual study walking tours that have typically been held alongside the in-person conferences.
6. Feedback and activity on social media indicates a positive reception to the event, with significant on the day discussion. Additional insight was also gathered on the day through a slido poll which will be used to inform the CTS workplan brought to the new board in September.
7. A feedback survey has been issued to delegates and will close on 26th March. Presentations from the event are now available online.

Proposal

8. Despite various clashes with activity this year, the early to mid-March period continues to attract a good number of delegates, while avoiding other significant dates like the LGA annual conference. We therefore propose that the conference remains around this period in 2024.
9. The conference has traditionally moved about the country to allow delegates to explore sights that are of cultural, sporting or touristic significance, including cities of culture. Since 2016, the conference has been held in: Bristol, Hull, London, Portsmouth, Virtually, and London. There was no conference in 2022.

10. While it was felt necessary to test the hybrid experience in 2023 using the LGA's own premises, it is desirable to return to the previous format of moving around the country. Hybrid facilities have improved, but the strong level of demand for in-person attendance at the 2023 conference suggests that location-based activity is again desirable.

11. Based on recent visits, the conference should take place in the North West, North East, or West Midlands, as regions that have not held a recent LGA CTS conference. There is a slight preference for the North West, as the Board has made visits to or held smaller events in Birmingham and Newcastle during this period.

12. The CTS Board has been invited to hold the 2024 conference in Prescot, by **Knowsley Council**, following the development and opening of Shakespeare North. This forms the centrepiece of a cultural regeneration, including green spaces and an historic venue. Knowsley was also Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture 2022 and has insight and experience that would be interesting to delegates. The close proximity to Liverpool also makes access relatively easy for delegates, including affordable accommodation if they choose to stay overnight.

Implications for Wales

13. None.

Financial Implications

14. The CTS conference is a fee-paying flagship event that must cover its own costs as well as generate income for the LGA. It is supplemented by a series of free events for members throughout the year.

Equalities implications

15. The LGA will ensure that speakers represent a broad range of lived experiences, alongside political and geographical balance.

Next steps

16. The Board are invited to reflect on their experience of the day, including the sessions they attended, overall format, and use of technology such as slido. This will inform future conferences.

17. Members are invited to agree:

    - A date of March 2024
    - Further investigation of Prescot as the preferred location.

Meeting: CTS Board

Date: 22 March 2023

Board visit to Plymouth, 21 June 2023

Purpose of report

For decision

Summary

The Board agreed to undertake one Board meeting outside of London during this cycle. Cllr Jemima Laing offered to host in Plymouth, which was accepted by the Board.

This paper outlines the proposed activities for the Board's meeting on 21 June.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That the Board comment on the proposed plan.

Contact details

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Position: Member Services Officer

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Board visit to Plymouth, 21 June 2023

Background

1. The Board agreed to undertake one Board meeting outside of London during this cycle. Cllr Jemima Laing offered to host in Plymouth, which was accepted by the Board.

Proposal

2. **10.30 – 12.30**: Board Meeting at Market Hall followed by lunch with Lindsey Hall, Director of Market Hall | Home to Plymouths awe-inspiring 15m immersive dome (realideas.org)
3. **1pm:** Transport to TR2 (Plymouth Royal Theatre Production Centre) via city centre, tour of TR2 with James Mackenzie Blackman, Theatre Director.
4. **2pm:** Transport to The Box, tour and tea with local cultural leaders.
5. **3.30pm:** Close
6. Board members arriving by train will need to take a taxi from the station to Market Hall. Transport will be provided between Market Hall and TR2. The Box is a 10 minute walk back to the station.

Implications for Wales

7. None.

Financial Implications

8. Board members are responsible for making and paying for their own travel arrangements to reach Market Hall, and the return journey to their councils.
9. The remaining costs will be covered from the LGA member services budget.

Equalities implications

10. Members with any mobility or dietary requirements should notify Alexander Reid by 20 May.

Next steps

11. LGA officers will confirm arrangements for the visit.