

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board - Councillor Ian Stephens Report to Councillors' Forum June 2016

Sport and Physical Activity

1. I was delighted to meet the Rt Hon David Evennett MP, Acting Sport and Tourism Minister, on 17 May. We discussed the Government's new approach to sport and physical activity, which places much greater emphasis on local delivery and encouraging people of all abilities to get active. I emphasised the opportunity to achieve a step change in the nation's health by a more localised approach to sport and physical activity. I also urged the Minister to act on the Triennial Review of Gaming Machine Stake and Prize Limits. We will be writing a letter setting out what we'd like to see in the Review.
2. Sport England announced a new £250 million fund to tackle inactivity as part of its strategy "Towards an Active Nation: 2016-21" on 19 May. There are a number of wins for the LGA in the strategy, which more than triples Sport England investment in tackling activity and will result in a significant re-balancing of funding away from national and towards local bodies. We will work closely with Sport England over the coming months to ensure that councils and local partners are central to their plans to tackle inactivity.
3. Cllr Geraldine Carter gave the introductory presentation at the latest Sport England Essentials Programme 2 – 3 March. The event supported nine portfolio holders to lead transformational change of leisure services.

Libraries

4. I had a very productive meeting with Ed Vaizey MP, Culture Minister, on 12 April. We discussed the progress of the joint LGA / Department for Culture, Media and Sport Leadership for Libraries Taskforce and noted the particular success of the WiFi rollout to nearly every public library. The Minister also agreed that local government must be fully involved in driving forward the recommendations from the Culture White Paper.
5. The LGA has encouraged councillors to respond to the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce's Ambition for Libraries consultation. Ambition will set out how local and central government work together to support thriving public libraries in a challenging fiscal climate. 18 councillors attended an LGA roundtable on 1 June and feedback informed the LGA's consultation response. Our response highlighted the importance of Ambition recognising local accountability, the diversity of library delivery models and the need to take forward support for councils in line with sector-led improvement.
6. I attended the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce's networking event on 27 May. This was an opportunity to reinforce the LGA's partnership with key organisations including the BBC, The British Library, ACE and the Society of Chief Librarians.

Culture

7. I attended an Arts Council England (ACE) workshop on 8 March to discuss ACE's proposals for funding organisations after 2018. The LGA's response supported a more proportionate approach to the National Portfolio, the stronger emphasis on place based working and opening up funding streams to museums and libraries.
8. Over 45 councils and partners attended the Cultural Commissioning Programme's National Evaluation Event at LGA on 13 April. I was pleased to chair the conference

which shared how Kent Council and Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group have embedded culture into their commissioning opportunities.

9. I spoke in a panel debate about local government funding at the Theatres 2016 Conference on 13 May. This was the biggest ever theatres conference and an opportunity to raise awareness about the difficult climate facing councils and how they are striving to work differently in order to support local theatres.
10. I participated in a panel debate at the Westminster Forum's Creative Industries Conference on 19 May. I emphasised the different ways in which councils support the creative industries, one of this country's strongest performing economic sectors.
11. I was delighted to meet Diane Lees, Chair of the National Museum Directors' Council and Director General of the Imperial War Museum, on 17 May. We discussed the museums review announced in the Culture White Paper and agreed it will be opportunity to highlight the contribution of museums to a range of social and economic outcomes.
12. I was pleased to meet Councillor Guy Nicholson, London Council's lead member for economy, tourism and culture, on 17 May. We discussed the importance of local government's relationship with Arts Council England and opportunities to further strengthen national and local partnerships.
13. I attended the launch of the Estuary Festival Programme on 17 May. Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, Garvesham and Kent are working with public and private partners to host an ambitious 16 day programme of contemporary visual art, literature, film and music.
14. The LGA submitted written evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee's Countries of Culture Inquiry. Our response highlighted New Local Government Research that showed councils have protected arts funding from the brunt of spending pressures and adopted new ways of working to improve sustainability. However, the scale of the funding challenge ahead means that more councils will have to take tough decisions about their cultural provision.

The Visitor Economy

15. I was delighted to meet Patricia Yates, VisitBritain's Director of Strategy and Communications on 8 April. Following significant changes to the national tourism landscape, the meeting was an opportunity to emphasise the importance of local areas having flexibility to allocated the £40 million Discover England Fund in line with local priorities and local destinations having a strong voice in new national governance arrangements.
16. Cllr Colin Organ attended the Tourism Alliance Board meeting on 3 May. The meeting was an opportunity to highlight the LGA's views on the Discover England Fund and to hear from industry on priority issues for them.

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