

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – End of Year Report

Background

1. The Culture, Tourism and Sport Board has shaped the national political agenda and made decisive interventions on priority issues for councils. The board has made a significant difference to LGA member councils, contributed to LGA corporate campaigns, and raised its national profile.
2. Key achievements include supporting councillors to lead transformational change, securing a re-balancing of national sports funding, developing analysis on the visitor economy and devolution, influencing the Culture White Paper, steering the Libraries Taskforce and delivering a successful annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference.

Priorities and Achievements

Sport and Physical Activity

3. The LGA successfully made the case to Government for councils and local partners to play a bigger role in the new national sports strategy in recognition of the success of locally-led approaches. In May 2016, Sport England announced a new £250 million fund to tackle inactivity, which will result in a significant re-balancing of funding away from national and towards local bodies.
4. The Chair met with Tracey Crouch MP, Sports Minister, the Rt Hon David Evennett MP, Acting Sports Minister, and Jesse Norman MP, Chair of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, to make the case for greater investment in grassroots sport and physical activity. The LGA's media campaign helped to persuade the Premier League to double the reach of its school sport programme to 10,000 schools in the next three years.
5. The LGA, in partnership with Sport England, supported 37 sport portfolio holders to lead transformational change of leisure services through the Sport Leadership Essentials Programme.

Libraries and Culture

6. As joint accountable body for the LGA and Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Libraries Taskforce, the Chair had a number of meetings with Ed Vaizey MP, Culture Minister, to agree Taskforce priorities and keep it focussed on the biggest issues for councils. The key achievement was to rollout free Wi-Fi to nearly every library in England through a DCMS and Arts Council England (ACE) managed project.
7. In line with a steer from the Board, the LGA's response to the Ambition for Libraries consultation highlighted the importance of recognising local accountability, the diversity of library delivery models and the need to take forward support for councils in line with sector-led improvement.
8. The LGA secured strong recognition of the role of councils in the Government's Culture White Paper, which was published in March 2016. The Chair wrote to Ministers, attended

a Ministerial roundtable in October on the role of heritage within the White Paper, and met the Culture Minister in April, emphasising that much of the country's cultural offer is funded and supported locally.

9. The LGA submitted written evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee's Countries of Culture Inquiry, highlighting that New Local Government Research has shown while funding challenges remain, councils have protected arts funding from the brunt of spending pressures, and have adopted new ways of working.
10. The Chair was interviewed by national trade magazines, and spoke at various national conferences, including cultural commissioning, the creative industries and theatres. This helped to raise the profile of the Board and highlight how despite funding pressures, councils are striving to support the cultural sector.
11. The LGA, in partnership with ACE, supported 36 culture and library portfolio holders to lead transformational change of cultural services through the Culture Leadership Essentials Programme, library seminar and library peer challenges.

The Visitor Economy and Heritage

12. In response to a steer from the Board, the LGA argued that VisitEngland's new Discover England Fund must be locally flexible and aligned to devolution deals when this makes sense. Members also made the case for English destinations to have a strong voice on new national tourism governance arrangements. The LGA commissioned new research which showed that devolution could further boost the visitor economy.
13. The LGA has continued to work with Historic England and The National Archives to seek out and share different approaches to organising local historic environment and archive services.

2016 Culture Tourism and Sport (CTS) Conference

14. The CTS Conference was held in Leicester 24th-25th February. Over 150 people attended and it scored a satisfaction rating of 92 per cent. Speakers included Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson (Chair of ukactive) and Stella Duffy (Co-Director Fun Palaces).

Programme of work and priorities 2016/17

15. While next year's Board will agree the work programme in September, we can expect a number of priorities to feature:
 - 15.1 Continue to ensure councils are fully involved in implementing the Culture White Paper, Sport England's new strategy and the Discover England fund.
 - 15.2 Steer the LGA/DCMS Leadership for Libraries Taskforce so that it focusses on the biggest issues for councils.
 - 15.3 Continue to deliver the Culture and Sport Improvement Programme (in partnership with Sport England and Arts Council England).
 - 15.4 Continue to consolidate and promote the Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference as the definitive event for our sector.