

Arts Council England and LGA: Shared Statement of Purpose

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

As the national voice for local government, and the Government's national development agency for culture, the LGA and Arts Council England enjoy a strong partnership.

We have updated our 2012 partnership agreement to reflect today's very different economic and political context. It will provide a framework for the next four years about how we will work together to support thriving local culture services.

Laura Dyer, Arts Council England's Deputy Chief Executive Places and Engagement, and Paul Bristow, Arts Council England's Strategic Partnerships Director, will join the Board to introduce the agreement. The discussion is also an opportunity for Members to share wider reflections on how the Arts Council works with the LGA and councils.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment upon, and agree, the draft Arts Council England and LGA Shared Statement of Purpose.

Action

To be taken forward by officers, as directed by Members.

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Introduction and Background

1. As the national voice for local government, and the Government's national development agency for culture, the LGA and the Arts Council enjoy a strong partnership. The Arts Council recognises that outside London local government is the biggest public funder of culture and regards the sector as their most important strategic partner.
2. In 2012, the LGA and the Arts Council signed a partnership agreement that set out how the two organisations would work together to support thriving local cultural services. The agreement provided a framework for our national partnership, set out principles that guided how we worked locally with councils and enabled councils to understand how they could benefit from our joint work.
3. The political and economic context within which the LGA and the Arts Council's partnership operates is very different now. Funding pressures, devolution, public service reform and exiting the EU are all changing how the LGA and the Arts Council work together, and how we support councils to improve their cultural services.
4. This report presents an updated Shared Statement of Purpose (Appendix A) that reflects the current landscape and is consistent with the direction of travel set out in the Culture White Paper. It covers:
 - 4.1 Our shared partnership** – how our partnership adds value to councils.
 - 4.2 Our shared ambition** – how the agreement helps to achieve our respective corporate priorities.
 - 4.3 The context within which we are operating** – the key economic and political trends that are shaping our partnership and how we support councils.
 - 4.4 How we will work together** – a set of shared principles that cover a place based approach, funding, leadership and support.
 - 4.5 What we will do and actions** – how we will monitor and keep the agreement relevant, and a summary of our 2016/17 joint improvement offer for councils.
5. As well as setting out how councils will benefit from our national partnership, the agreement will underpin joint advocacy to Ministers and others on the significant economic, wellbeing and social outcomes that culture can help to achieve.
6. The Culture White Paper included an action for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to carry out a Targeted Review of Arts Council England as part of the Government's programme to periodically review all public bodies.

7. The Board discussion is an opportunity for Members to comment upon the Statement of Shared Purpose and to share any wider reflections on how the Arts Council works with the LGA and councils, which will help to shape our response to the Targeted Review.

Next Steps

8. Subject to Members' views, it is suggested the final version of the agreement is circulated to culture portfolio holders and heads of cultural services with a joint letter from the Chair of the CTS Board and the Chair of Arts Council England, highlighting our 2016/17 offer to councils.
9. It is proposed that the agreement is reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure that it reflects our joint work and the latest opportunities and challenges for cultural services.