

27 November 2018

Work programme on culture, tourism and sport

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction

Summary

Following discussion with lead members, this paper sets out the Board's priority areas of work during 2018/19.

Recommendations

Members are invited to comment on opportunities to deliver the priorities identified, including local examples of issues or best practice.

Action

Officers to initiate the work programme in line with members' steer.

Contact officer: Ian Leete
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 0207 664 3143
Email: ian.leete@local.gov.uk

Work programme on culture, tourism and sport

Background

1. At its first meeting in October, the Board requested a paper outlining options for a work programme during 2018/19, following on from the approach during 2017/18. The work programme for that year focused on three areas: culture-led regeneration; tourism skills; and extending the visitor season.
2. During the Board discussion, members identified the following possible areas of interest: tourism skills (carry-over from 2017/18); social prescribing; the Industrial Strategy and a conversation with Local Enterprise Partnerships; social cohesion and community cohesion.
3. Lead members discussed these options during their pre-board meeting, along with the Government's newly announced Festival of Innovation and Creativity, which has a £120 million budget.
4. This paper sets out their agreed areas of priority and key pieces of work.

Resources

5. The CTS Board has 1 senior adviser, 1 adviser, and 2.5 days of a graduate trainee directly allocated to it. It also shares the time of a Principal Policy Adviser with two other Boards.
6. A programme manager is being recruited to support the delivery of the improvement contracts for Arts Council England and Sport England, although they will not be in post before January 2019.
7. The Board can additionally call on support from: 1 events manager, business support officer, 1 communications officer, and 1 public affairs officer. These officers are also tasked with supporting other Boards, but include CTS as part of their remit.

Priority areas

8. **Social prescribing** – Social prescribing cuts across the Board portfolio, having equal relevance to the cultural and sporting sides. Given the level of national attention and activity on this subject at this time, lead members agreed that it should be a primary focus for the Board during 2018/19.
9. The LGA contributed to the launch of the APPG on arts, health and wellbeing report last year on the value of social prescribing, with Lord Howarth presenting at the CTS

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conference. A new centre for social prescribing is being established, and the NHS has appointed a GP Champion for the subject.

10. On 6 November, Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care made a speech recognising the value of preventative action through social prescribing and announcing a planned shift of emphasis and resources towards it. While the role of local government public health budgets was not recognised in the speech, the role of libraries was very strongly emphasised – Matt Hancock identified them as a core delivery point for social prescribing.
11. Possible actions include contributing to the development of the new national centre, lobbying to position local authorities more centrally to Matt Hancock’s vision for social prescribing, and ensuring local cultural and sport services have the information on how to best align themselves with this topic and collaborate with the health system. This could include a conference on the subject.
12. **Tourism**– The Board has just commissioned in depth research into the role of local government in creating a pipeline of skills for the tourism sector. This will report in March 2019. The sector continues to lobby for a sector deal under the Industrial Strategy and, irrespective of that, the sector will need to make significant adjustment to its workforce as a result of Brexit.
13. A recent event hosted by the LGA and the Coastal Special Interest Group for the Lords Select Committee on Coastal Regeneration featured six case studies from coastal councils, each of which raised tourism as a primary concern for their council. As the commission for the presentations did not mention tourism, we can take this as an indication that our membership consider tourism a priority issue for their areas. Our National Parks members have also raised this as a priority concern.
14. Lead members have also agreed that the CTS will take the lead on developing existing LGA proposals for a tourism levy. This follows work by other LGA Boards on possible options for promoting fiscal devolution. In the context of a work programme, this could involve working with member councils that have shown an interest in developing a model for how a tax could work, liaison with other LGA Board (Resources, City Regions, and People and Places), and parliamentary lobbying work if appropriate. Scotland is also consulting on proposals and officers have been in touch with COSLA counterparts to discuss progress.
15. In addition to the commissioned research, work on tourism would include further lobbying and refinement of the tourism sector deal proposal.
16. **Culture-led regeneration** – The Board commissioned research into culture-led regeneration in 17/18 and will launch it at the annual culture, tourism and sport conference on 5/6 March 2019. Lead members agreed that culture-led regeneration

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remains a priority for the Board during 18/19, but with a shift away from research into embedding and disseminating the findings into funded programmes and council practices.

17. There are potential opportunities with the development of Local Industrial Strategies to embed this work with the sector, and the team could ensure that any guidance/support offered on these makes reference to the learning from our research. Work can also be undertaken with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities to make them aware of the potential for culture as they take forward their strategies, drawing on the example of New Anglia LEP. This would involve liaising with officers supporting the People and Places and City Regions Board, and with the LEP Network.
18. Lead members have commissioned the development of a 'cultural strategy in a box', designed to guide councils through the development of a cultural strategy that will make the most effective use of their local cultural assets, skills and programming opportunities. This will draw on the LGA's research, as well as finding from the programme of cultural peer challenges delivered over previous years for Arts Council England.
19. The 2018 Budget also announced two initiatives that could support councils to implement the findings of the research. Firstly, a £120 million Festival of Innovation and Creativity, which is designed to showcase British ingenuity post-Brexit. We believe this should leave a lasting legacy of grassroots cultural activity and support for cultural entrepreneurs. For this to take place, investment in cultural infrastructure would need to take place, using the principles identified in our culture-led regeneration research. The role of libraries, in particular, should be placed at the forefront of our influencing work in this area.
20. The second budget announcement was an investment of £625 million in the regeneration of high streets, including £55 million specifically to support the heritage elements. The announcement recognises that culture and leisure will need to replace at least part of the existing retail offer, which is in significant decline. Government has already launched a consultation on changing permitted development to support this transformation, and we have used lines from the research in the LGA's response to the consultation.

Areas of future interest

21. **Social and Community Cohesion** – the Board has expressed an interest in exploring the relationship between culture and sport and social cohesion. The LGA has been supporting Sport England and Birmingham City Council to research possible metrics for measuring the impact of sport participation on giving a feeling of integration and belonging to a community. We suggest this work, and disseminating any findings from it, should be the focus of any work on social cohesion. We understand there is similar work underway in Manchester.

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22. There will also be opportunities to explore this work once the DCMS select committee has published the findings of its enquiry into the social impact of participation in sport and culture.
23. Lead members agreed that community cohesion is not a priority area of work for 18/19, but that attention is paid to relevant research and strategies, including the loneliness strategy, with a view for potentially prioritising it in 19/20, once key pieces of evidence and recommendations for moving the work forward have been published.

Reduced priority areas

24. **Libraries** – The Board has directed work on this area to narrow its focus to allow other issues to be prioritised. This was done by agreeing with the Taskforce that it would switch its annual investment of £500 000 in to direct transformation support for the sector. However, DCMS civil servants have transferred only £117 000 to Arts Council, as the development body for libraries, retaining the rest in-house for staff costs. They are also proposing ‘Ambition 2’ and the continuation of the Taskforce beyond 2020.
25. The Board could choose to support the DCMS proposal. However, we believe that an investment in transformation support is the best help that can be provided to the sector. We recommend that the Board reaffirms, in a letter to the Minister, its view that investment should go direct to the sector and that a full successor to Ambition is not needed at this time.
26. Through prioritising social prescribing and culture-led regeneration, the Board has ensured that there will be significant opportunities to make the case for libraries as high profile locations for social prescribing and creative activity. These lines can be incorporated in that work with minimal additional effort, and have the best potential to embed libraries in funded local and national policy.
27. **Parks** – parks services continue to face significant financial pressure, and feedback member councils is that this is beginning to affect their ability to deliver against national priorities, such as increasing physical activity, tackling loneliness, and increasing community cohesion.
28. National funding partners, such as Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Trust, advise that there is now insufficient infrastructure and capacity within parks services for them to be confident that their investments will have a long-term positive impact on a park. They have launched a fund to accelerate the development of new delivery models for parks, which replaces some of their direct investments.
29. MHCLG has convened a parks action group to try and support services. However, to date the group has only commissioned one piece of work, yet has been very resource heavy in terms of meetings and officer time. The LGA hosted a sold out parks conference in May 2018 to introduce the sector to the group and allow the sector to feed

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in its priority concerns. However, the lack of visibility of the group is leading to a loss of confidence in it from the sector.

30. Given the cross-cutting impact of parks on a variety of key agendas, there is a clear value to intervening in this space. However, it is no longer clear that the existing method through the Parks Action Group is an effective way of doing this.
31. Lead members have determined that our current allocation of resources to this work is not sustainable. They have outlined a series of actions to address this, with an initial response of writing to the Minister expressing concern at the lack of progress and seeking further coordination from MHCLG.
32. If this does not materialise, the LGA will review its engagement in the PAG with a view to stepping back from most PAG activities and instead supporting the sector through lobbying for more investment in parks, as a key delivery mechanism for sporting ambitions, social prescribing, and the loneliness strategy. The LGA will also continue to support partners on projects like Future Parks 2 (NESTA) and the Parks Accelerator (HLF/National Trust).

Implications for Wales

33. The WLGA does not commission us to work on wider improvement issues. This service is provided directly by WLGA.

Financial Implications

34. The Board has a budget of £30 000 allocated at the start of each financial year. £25 000 has been committed to projects for 2018/19. The new financial year will start in March 2019. Additional funding will be provided to support the proposed tourism levy research.
35. In 2017 and 2018, the Board chose to invest the majority of its budget into large-scale research into priority areas – culture-led regeneration, and tourism skills.
36. By commissioning in this way, the Board can significantly increase its impact. However, there is a time investment required from the core team in ensuring the effective delivery of these projects.

Next steps

37. Officers will progress as directed, bringing papers on a tourism levy and social prescribing to the next Board.