

Update on current issues

Purpose of report

For information/ noting.

Summary

This report updates Members on current issues of interest to the Board which are not covered elsewhere in the agenda. Updates are included on:

- New Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
- Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment
- Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation Funding
- Sieghart Libraries Review
- First World War resource for councils and communities
- Broadband
- CTS Sessions at LGA Annual Conference
- Sport, physical activity and legacy

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the update.

Action

Officers to action as appropriate.

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Update on current issues

New Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

1. Sir Merrick Cockell, LGA Chairman, has written to congratulate Sajid Javid MP on his appointment as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, emphasising our sector's contribution to growth and the need for continued strong working between us and the Department and its arm's length bodies. The letter is attached at **Annex A**. Sir Merrick followed this by meeting Mr Javid on 11 June, where they discussed the broadband roll out, arts funding and continued joint working between DCMS and the LGA.

Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment

2. The Farrell Review has concluded its national review of architecture and the built environment and presented its findings.
3. The LGA made several representations to the Review team. The CTS Board and the LGA Chairman, Sir Merrick Cockell met representatives of the Review team, including Sir Terry Farrell, and the LGA also submitted written evidence.
4. It is very encouraging that the Review Team has taken on board many of the LGA's points. In particular, we support the review's emphasis on how elected councillors can work together with design professionals and residents to develop a vision for places really worth living in. The LGA looks forward to continuing its work with the Review Team as they move into the implementation phase. Read the Executive Summary of the review <http://tinyurl.com/mcusoyt>

Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding

5. The Arts Council has seen reductions to Grant in aid of 36 per cent since 2010. The current National portfolio includes 696 organisations. At this current level of Grant in aid Arts Council England could only support a National portfolio of between 250 - 300 organisations in the next investment round. Using National Lottery money will allow many more organisations to join the portfolio. For some organisations this will be the first time that their total grant will be wholly comprised of Lottery funding.
6. The level of Lottery investment in the portfolio in 2014/15 was £28.3 million per annum. The proposed National portfolio budget for 2015/16 to 2017/18 includes approximately £60 million of National Lottery funding per annum. Decisions about NPOs being funded will be made in July.

Sieghart Review

7. Culture, Tourism and Sport Board lead members had a very positive meeting in April with William Sieghart, publisher and entrepreneur, who has been asked by the Departments for Culture, Media and Sport and Communities and Local Government to lead an independent review of public libraries. We said to Mr. Sieghart that the future of libraries has to be considered as part of the overall council service offer to communities; libraries are most likely to be viable when they can demonstrate their value to the widest possible

group of users. We encouraged the panel to build on good practice and help to drive innovation in the locally-managed service. We are giving oral evidence to the full panel on 7 July.

First World War resources for councils and communities

8. A guide to engaging communities in this year's First World War centenary programme has been published by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
9. Among the activities and events suggested for involving local people and school children is 'Lights Out'. This is an invitation to every building, business and community in the UK to switch off their lights on 4 August from 10.00pm until 11.00pm, leaving on a single light, marking the moment that Britain entered World War One.
10. The LGA is working with the Imperial War Museum to encourage more councils to join the centenary partnership and organise events to commemorate the centenary. Further details on the guide <http://tinyurl.com/l5u3rgc> and LGA website <http://tinyurl.com/mnlan78>.
11. The LGA continues to support councils to involve communities in other historic anniversaries, particularly the 800th Magna Carta anniversary in 2015.

Broadband

12. In March 2014, the Government announced a further £250 million fund (to be locally matched) so that 95% of UK homes and businesses (4.6 million) have access to superfast broadband by 2017. Following feedback from the Local Government Delivery Council (a Chief Executive advisory group to the LGA on service transformation), the LGA is hosting an event on 30 June for the 45 councils eligible for the fund to discuss opportunities for collaboration on procurement.
13. The Government is also running a £10 million competitive fund to develop innovative fixed, wireless and mobile broadband solutions that will reach the final 5% of premises in the most isolated places. It is essential that the solution developed is cost effective for councils.
14. The People and Places Board, which has a strong interest in broadband due to its geographic remit and links to its wider work on planning and infrastructure, discussed progress with the rollout at its meeting on 16 June.
15. Discussion highlighted councils' continued frustrations with the broadband rollout, including value for money, lack of competition and lack of robust in-contract controls. Members highlighted the need to ensure proper competition for the Broadband Extension Programme and the importance of securing 100% coverage through cost effective new technology.
16. Paul Raynes, LGA Head of Programmes, has an introductory meeting with Chris Townsend, the new Chief Executive of Broadband Delivery UK on 2 July, and this is an early opportunity to discuss councils' concerns.

CTS Sessions at LGA Annual Conference

17. There are two CTS Session at this year's LGA annual Conference to which all Board Members are invited:

17.1 Future libraries – Tuesday 8 July, 4:45pm – 5:45pm

From co-locating libraries with other services to using buildings more creatively and efficiently, providing assisted digital access to a range of services, as well as the most up-to-date version of the traditional offer of written information, libraries are demonstrating their value to an ever wider group of users.

This session will give delegates an opportunity to influence the Sieghart review and to hear from councils about how they are embedding libraries as part of the overall council service offer to communities.

William Sieghart, Chair of the Independent Libraries Panel, will speak at the workshop.

17.2 Connecting communities – Thursday 10 July, 9:00am – 10:00am

Councils are leading the superfast broadband roll out in the UK. Fast and reliable broadband is a vital enabler of economic growth, providing the infrastructure that means councils, businesses and communities can benefit from being online. It is also central to wider public service transformation with an increasing number of services, including Universal Credit, mainly accessed online. However, with 11 million people lacking basic digital skills, councils are also at the forefront of supporting people to get online.

This session will explore how councils are working with Broadband Delivery UK to roll out superfast broadband and share innovative approaches to increasing digital capability.

Chris Townsend, Chief Executive, Broadband Delivery UK and Councillor Jonathan Owen, Leader of East Riding of Yorkshire Council, will be the speakers.

18. To view the full conference programme, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/qafutx4>

Sport, Physical Activity and Legacy

Active People 8 results

19. Sport England has published its Active People 8 results, which measured participation rates in sport/physical activity between April 2013 – April 2014. The results show that:

19.1 5.6 million adults now play sport or undertake physical activity (for at least 30 minutes) once a week. An increase of 1.7 million since 2005/6 (when the UK were awarded the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games);

19.2 In addition, over 900,000 14-15 year olds play sport or undertake physical activity at least once a week;

19.3 However, most adults (52 per cent) still do not play sport or undertake physical activity for at least 30 minutes per week; and

19.4 Swimming, Athletics, Football and Cycling were the most popular activities.

For further information <http://tinyurl.com/njtokgf>

Moving More Living More events

20. The LGA is working in partnership with Public Health England, UKactive and the County Sports Partnership Network to run a series of regional events aimed at bringing together the various sectors and organisations involved in promoting physical activity and embedding legacy.
21. The LGA is promoting the concept that increases in physical activity levels will best be achieved at a local level with local providers working together to improve the local connectivity of physical activity initiatives. Events will take place at:
 - 10 July – Birmingham
 - 14 July – Leeds
 - 15 July – London
 - 16 July – Cambridge
 - 17 July – Bristol
22. Members from the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board and Community Wellbeing Boards are co-chairing the events.

To view the programme and book your place <http://tinyurl.com/m9xtbwb>