

Key lines on Culture, Tourism and Sport

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This document sets out the current key lobbying lines and sector statistics across the remit of the LGA culture, tourism and sport board. The lines are intended to record our key positions only, and are not intended to cover every element of the Board's remit. These lines will be used as the template for media enquiries and responses, although the culture, tourism and sport team will work to customise them to the situation, and will develop bespoke lines when required.

Due to the fast pace of change, these lines are kept under continuous review. Please contact the lead policy officer for the latest lines, or cts@local.gov.uk.

Recommendation

That the Board note the report and comment on any omissions.

Action

Officers will update these lines in line with new developments and announcements.

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Key lines on Culture, Tourism and Sport

Cross-cutting lines:

1. **Great places.** Culture, tourism and sport services are some of the most valued by local communities, fundamentally contributing to make areas a great place to live, work and visit.
2. **Economic impact.** The economic sectors supported and supplying these services are among the fastest growing parts of the economy, and employ well over 2 million people. The economic benefits of these services are also found in every council area.
3. **Online/offline.** While innovation in digital provision of services should be celebrated, we must ensure traditional forms of delivery are maintained if we are to avoid inequality of access. Public access to physical buildings and services remain at the heart of culture and leisure services and they require sustainable funding to remain open.
4. **Social prescribing.** Covid-19 has shown how important culture and leisure is to communities' health and wellbeing. Social prescribing through culture, sports and green space programmes will be essential to recovery, but it is important that the activities to which patients are being referred are adequately funded, since this funding is not included within existing plans and capacity is limited.

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Key lines on culture

5. Councils run over 3,000 libraries, and more than 350 museums, public archives, numerous theatres and galleries, and are responsible for many monuments and historic buildings.
6. Cultural services are integral to the social fabric of the UK and can deliver against some of our most pressing agendas. They can improve public health and educational outcomes. They can contribute to community cohesion. They attract tourists and other visitors, boosting our economies; a cultural institution can be a key anchor for a regeneration programme, and a major draw for businesses. Arts and culture add more than £10.8 billion to the UK economy every year.
7. Museums, galleries, libraries and arts organisations have adapted imaginatively to lockdown, providing new and innovative services for their communities, but they have been unable to generate income during this time putting many at risk of closure.

8. **Funding.** The Government's £1.57 billion support package to help protect the futures of UK theatres, galleries, museums and other cultural venues is welcome. Councils are well-placed to deliver some of the funding to those organisations most in need, and who are critical to the local cultural offer. However, Councils will also need further funding and financial flexibilities in the weeks and months ahead to meet ongoing COVID-19 pressures and to get culture and leisure services running normally again.
9. **Cultural Renewal Taskforce.** The LGA has warned that excluding councils from the Government's newly created Cultural Renewal Taskforce removes the local voice on cultural renewal. With councils spending over £1.1 billion on museums, theatres and libraries, as well as investing over £1 billion a year on sport, leisure and green spaces, it is crucial that their views are represented when the Government plans to make important decisions affecting the future of the sector.
10. **Cultural recovery plan.** We have asked the Government to:
 - 10.1. **adopt a place-based approach to recovery.** Councils are the local leaders of place and best placed to coordinate recovery. By ensuring councils are at the top table for discussions – including the new Cultural Renewal taskforce and the Tourism Industry Council – you will harness their resources and expertise and maximise impact. Arts Council England's (ACE) new strategy recognises the approach, and DCMS should support ACE to return to its delivery plans as soon as is feasible.
 - 10.2. **extend the furlough scheme for specific sectors** until most organisations are able to return to financial viability. The furlough scheme has provided a lifeline to jobs and businesses. As cultural organisations are expected to be among the slowest to recover and their ability to generate income will take time to return to normal levels, a formal extension to the scheme during the period when social distancing measures are still in place would provide security to the sector and protect jobs.
 - 10.3. support councils and Combined Authorities to **develop more cultural compacts**, using the model currently being piloted by Arts Council England.
 - 10.4. invest £30 million capital funding in libraries to **develop a network of 'makerspaces' and public access computers;**
 - 10.5. invest £500 million in councils to **fund social prescribing facilities**, including leisure centres and libraries which support community activities, working with the

National Academy for Social Prescribing to ensure that cultural organisations are funded to deliver wellbeing outcomes.

- 10.6. make £100 million capital funding available to **convert disused retail units on the high streets into creative studios** to enable creative industries (worth £111 billion GDP) to thrive and drive footfall to high streets.
- 10.7. **ensure councils have the planning powers needed to curate high streets**, as was done by removing permitted development rights from theatres and performance venues, protecting them from inappropriate development and preserving them for the community.
- 10.8. **fund locally led support to theatres and other venues** that will not be commercially viable under conditions of social distancing but that want to reopen to improve community wellbeing and skills development and begin to use their multiplier effect on local economies.
- 10.9. Commit to a rapid rollout of the announced next tranche of **business and intellectual property centres**.

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Key lines on sport, physical activity, parks and green spaces

11. Councils are responsible for a third of swimming pools, 31 per cent of grass pitches; 13 per cent of sports halls; and almost of fifth of all health and fitness facilities. They spend over £1 billion pa on sport, leisure and green spaces, parks and playgrounds, providing communities with access to vital facilities to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.
12. **Funding crisis facing leisure providers due to Covid-19:** We are calling on the Government to introduce emergency funding to stabilise providers in the leisure sector who are ineligible for much of the emergency funding due to their charity status but continue to incur costs whilst closed and are near collapse. And for utility companies to provide short-term relief on utility charges. Losing these services will leave many people and families without access to affordable leisure provision and exercise opportunities. They play an important role in reducing the burden on the NHS, tackling health inequalities and are a key delivery vehicle for the social prescribing agenda.
13. **Ageing leisure facilities:** Research prior to the pandemic showed nearly two thirds of leisure facilities are more than 10 years old and require refurbishment and nearly a

quarter of all sports halls and swimming pools have not been refurbished in more than 20 years. Many of these older properties are at immediate risk of closure. We are calling on government to introduce a £500 million funding pot for councils to redesign, upgrade and renovate facilities to the standard needed to support healthy, active communities and transform the nation's health and help meet the latest energy efficiency and environmental standards and contribute to net zero carbon targets. New funding from Government is needed now to avoid having to completely replace facilities, which could cost in the region of £1.5 billion further down the line.

14. **Parks and green spaces:** are a key resource, enjoyed by people of all ages across the country, and sit at the heart of local communities. The pandemic has further demonstrated how valuable they are both during and post- covid-19. The money local government has to provide vital services such as parks and open spaces is running out fast and huge uncertainty remains about how councils will pay for services into the next decade and beyond. Coronavirus has further added significant funding pressures which LGA analysis shows councils are facing a funding gap of £7.2bn. For councils to be able to continue maintaining parks and reopen facilities such as children's play areas which will be essential for communities as lockdown eases, the Government needs to provide councils with long-term, sustainable funding for these services.
15. **Active travel:** Councils already play a key role in encouraging residents to cycle by promoting cycling proficiency tests and bike safety awareness campaigns, providing dedicated on-road cycle paths, installing secure cycle parking on high streets and supporting bike sharing schemes. They responded quickly to Covid-19 to install pop up cycle lanes to enable alternatives to public transport. Our parks and green spaces must be fully connected to the Government's plans to invest £2bn in active travel. Building on the success of the Green Chain Walk and Thames path in London, when connected up, these spaces can make a powerful contribution to tackling obesity and getting more people active. Long-term sustainable funding is needed to embed this change in communities and places, this will greatly improve public health and reduce pollution.
16. **Physical activity:** Councils are champions for promoting physical activity both inside and outside of the gym or swimming pool. Planning strategies now include measures to increase cycling and walking routes and introduce sustainable green spaces in new developments. Councils could do so much more to tackle health inequalities, physical inactivity and obesity but need the Government to commit to long-term sustainable funding for leisure and park services which play an important part in people's health and mental wellbeing.
17. **Health and social inequalities:** The coronavirus pandemic has hit those from more deprived backgrounds and the black, Asian and minority ethnic community hardest,

whether that be through deaths, digital poverty or a lack of accessibility to parks, private gardens and green spaces to exercise. Research by Public Health England has revealed that the most vulnerable do not have equal access to green space. People facing the greatest deprivation are experiencing a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 and existing poor health puts them at risk of more severe outcomes if they contract the virus. If we are to improve the health and mental wellbeing of those communities who experience health and social inequalities the most, we need a national cross-departmental health and social inequalities strategy that recognises the value of parks, leisure centres and cultural venues, backed up with sustainable funding.

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Key lines on tourism and the visitor economy

18. **Scope.** The visitor economy is more broadly defined than the tourism sector. As well as holiday accommodation, visitor attractions, and travel businesses, it includes arts and cultural venues, performance spaces and performers, heritage buildings and natural landscapes. For instance, culture is linked to 42% of all in-bound tourism related expenditure. Following Liverpool's year as Capital of Culture the city has seen a doubling of hotel space and of visitors.
19. **Value.** Since 2010 tourism has been the fastest growing sector in the UK in employment terms. Britain was forecast to have a tourism industry worth over £257 billion by 2025. It was worth £126.9 billion in GDP in 2013, or 9% of GDPⁱ. In 2013, tourism accounted for 3.1 million jobs, or 9.6% of total UK jobs. The 37.9 million overseas visitors who came to the UK in 2018 spent £22.9 billion. These figures represent a 3% decrease in volume and 7% (nominal) decrease in value compared with 2017. The UK accounted for 3.7% of international tourism receipts in 2017.
20. **Hospitality sector.** The hospitality industry directly employs some 9% of all workers in the economy and directly and indirectly supports around 4m jobs in total. The industry supports a vast array of supporting services such as cleaners, maintenance companies, farmers, butchers, other suppliers and landlords. This is a huge workforce vulnerable to redundancy decisions in the weeks and months ahead. The night time economy of £66bn per year is largely underpinned by cultural activityⁱⁱ. However, overall the industry contributes £150bn to the economy and £50bn in tax revenues per year.
21. **The role of councils.** Councils have a strong stake in the visitor economy. They are direct providers, running tourism attractions themselves, including castles and historic buildings, parks, piers, amusement parks, and destination management organisations. They run over 350 museums, public archives, numerous theatres and galleries, and are

responsible for many monuments. Overall, they are the largest public investor in cultural activity, spending over £1.1 billion. Councils' contribution to regional visitor economies is particularly significant, with many of our regional airports being directly or indirectly owned and managed by councils. These critical transport hubs are essential to ensuring all parts of the country benefit from the visitor economy.

22. **National influence.** Councils and Combined Authorities must be involved in national conversation on the visitor economy, given their unique position as direct deliverers of attractions, key transport infrastructure, funders, and curators of place. Councils and Combined Authorities must have representation on the Tourism Industry Council chaired by the Minister of Tourism to allow them to maximise their contribution to the economic recovery, and effectively manage their own key tourism businesses.
23. **Investment need.** There is a clear need for direct investment in the tourism sector of at least £1 billion, in addition to the extension of existing packages of support. The new £1.57 billion cultural and heritage fund announced on 5 July should also complement a comparable investment in tourism, given the close inter-relationship of these sectors. However, the cultural fund alone will not address the needs of the tourism sector, and will itself fail to have the desired impact if supporting visitor economy businesses, such as coach companies, do not survive and are unable to channel large numbers of visitors to the cultural organisations. We are calling on the Government to introduce a funding programme that builds on the work of the Cultural Destination Programme^{vi}, Great Places Scheme^{vii}, and Discover England Fund^{viii} which enabled arts and culture organisations to increase their reach by working with the tourism sector. With some of our member councils with seaside resorts to be the hardest hit due to the pandemic, it is crucial local authorities have every opportunity to support this sector at their disposal.
24. **Tourism Zones**, announced as part of the Government's Tourism Sector Deal, should be expanded in number and scope, with appropriately scaled funding levels, and brought forward as soon as possible. This should include innovative options for raising finance, building on proposals from the [Cultural Cities Enquiry](#), the option of a tourism levy, and business improvement districts.
25. **Tourism levy.** There is consensus that a tourism levy should be tested, but mixed views about whether it should be introduced on a national basis, for every area, or be a local decision. However, there is agreement that receipts from taxation should be ringfenced for investment in the area that raised the tax. Possible expenditure included local authority services (public realm), tourism market intelligence and out of season marketing in order to ensure industry buy-in. Partners recognise the need for international competitiveness, and feel that a reduction in VAT for accommodation

providers could be considered alongside the tourism levy, as a way of ensuring that similar levels of public money are raised, but are not an additional financial burden on businesses, who will benefit from the tourism levy being directly invested in supporting the local tourism offer where the money is raised.

26. **Three winters.** In the short term, it is important to avoid a cliff-edge, with a shortened and smaller summer season, followed by an end to government support in October leads these economies facing 'three winters'. Government should work to maximise 2020 income through extending the season into autumn and winter. Councils and Combined authorities have suggested a variety of ways this can be achieved:
- 26.1. Visit Britain/England to devolve budget and/or of control of promotion of region to focus on autumn and winter, as well as periods beyond this
 - 26.2. Out of season events development funds and by relaxation of restrictions on holiday parks and resorts to allow out of season operation
 - 26.3. A specific support plan for the tourism and hospitality sector to see it through until March 2021, and beyond that, funding to deliver the tourism sector deal priorities
27. **National review of DMOs.** Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) are seen as critical by all partners during the recovery period. A rapid review of DMOs must be conducted to ensure they are appropriately structured and resourced to deliver on our marketing and business support needs. There has been variable performance even before this period and, while some have provided invaluable support to business recently, others have had to furlough staff from financial necessity. Effective marketing and business support to tourism businesses and potential visitors will be critical in the months ahead.
28. **VisitEngland.** It is important that national marketing campaigns run by VisitBritain and VisitEngland are sufficiently joined-up with local activity so that shared messages are developed, networks exploited, duplication avoided and growth markets targeted. For the next two years, significant resources must be redirected at internal UK marketing. This must include campaigns to extend the visitor season beyond the summer period, using tested methods like Christmas markets and trialling innovative methods to extend the visitor economy into other seasons. We recommend that VisitEngland is strengthened, with its own budgets, and given the resources needed to maintain its new visitor kitemark; and to work with Natural England on websites that redirect visitors to less crowded and well known parts of the country.

29. **Sustainable tourism and travel.** Investment in closing the ‘last mile’ will be crucial to ensuring that rural visitor economies can compete in a green recovery. The lack of a joined up transport offer between the nearest train station and the target attraction or accommodation has meant that the car has invariably been the form of transport required for rural destinations. We must invest in cycling, walking, and rural bus provision to ensure that visitors can benefit from a climate sustainable approach to enjoying our visitor destinations.

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Key lines on coastal tourism

30. Coastal towns are integral to the UK visitor economy by attracting both national and international tourists, and therefore helping to boost our local economies.
31. Integral to a sense of place, tourism generates billions of pounds for the national economy; the coast is fundamental to this sector. However, there are also the well-documented negative impacts of seasonality, low wages, over-dependence on out-dated infrastructure, and pressure on the environment, all of which have been crystallised by the COVID-19 pandemic.
32. Coastal towns have faced immense financial pressures as a result of social distancing measures and the need to protect their local residents. With limited ability to generate income in the previous months, many local businesses have fallen through the cracks of government support and risk closure in the months that follow.
33. The sector has taken one of the biggest financial hits due to the COVID-19 crisis. Gaps in support packages alongside the absence of the seasonal boost the industry usually sees over the summer, means the impact will be felt in the weeks and months to come, even as social distancing measures are eased.
34. **Infrastructure.** Ensuring the rich cultural offer of coastal towns is maintained, government must continue to support the regeneration of coastal frontages, beach management, transport links and the provision of cultural infrastructure.
35. **Employment.** Coastal towns create local jobs for local people, with 25% of employment in these areas established through the visitor economy. We are therefore calling on government to:
- 35.1. extend the furlough scheme for tourism specific sectors until most organisations are able to return to financial viability. The furlough scheme has provided a lifeline to jobs and businesses. This support will not only retain the infrastructure of local

business, but will also help to protect jobs until social distancing measures are fully released.

- 35.2. many cultural venues, such as theatres, to be supported to ensure they are commercially viable, even under conditions of social distancing. Many local businesses financial model is reliant on full capacity, but must be offered support to reopen at reduced capacity to optimise community wellbeing at a time when it is needed most. Failure to do so will result in a loss of jobs and critical business.
36. **Skills.** Coastal towns are central to the enhancement of skills, training and employment opportunities, helping to develop the community benefits of tourism. COVID-19 has created a 'skills gap' for the sector, as the closing of business has meant limited training has taken place within the sector. Government must therefore support the funding of tourism business apprenticeships, most notably within the hospitality sector.
37. **Funding.** COVID-19 has demonstrated how integral coastal towns are in generating revenue. In order to rebuild their economies, councils located in coastal areas will require strong financial support and flexibilities until social distancing measures are completely released, and businesses can run on a 'business as usual' model. With many businesses struggling to access financial support, many risk closure in the coming months.
38. **Financial support during the autumn/winter seasons.** If social distancing is to be maintained through the winter months, many local businesses in coastal towns will lose out on the revenue generated through indoor events, particularly around the Christmas period. To ensure coastal towns continue to benefit from the winter season, financial support must be offered to ensure businesses do not risk closure during this period and are fit to 'bounce back' in 2021.
39. **Lost business and greater financial support.** With the congregation of large groups of people into event spaces being discouraged under social distancing rules, many coastal towns will have lost out on a year's worth of events and festivals, which play a huge part in local income generation. Financial support must be provided to fill this gap.
40. **Clearer guidance.** With the loosening of restrictions, there will be an influx of domestic visitors travelling to coastal towns across the country. The anticipated influx of people is expected to create a number of challenges around littering and anti-social behaviour. Councils must therefore be provided with clear guidance and support on how to mitigate and plan for such circumstances to avoid increasing R rates in local areas.

- 41. Communications.** Coastal councils would benefit from being notified about government announcements in advance, to ensure they are in a position to prepare for changes in government legislation. For example, when beaches were announced to reopen, councils did not have enough time to arrange amenities and facilities, which led to an increase in anti-social behaviour which can ultimately lead to an increase in infection.

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Implications for Wales

- 42.** These lobbying lines are primarily designed for an English context, as culture, tourism and sport policy areas are a devolved matter, with significant operational differences. However, lines relating to the value culture, tourism and sport sectors and the contribution they make to society and the economy will apply to a Welsh context as well.

Financial Implications

- 43.** None.

Next steps

- 44.** LGA officers will update and refresh as directed and required.