

LGA Improvement Activity 2020/21

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper updates the Board on the delivery of the Sport England and Arts Council England Improvement awards for 2020/21. Due to the implications of the Government's guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic, all activity is being delivered through a series of online webinars, this will continue until 1 March 2021 (May 2021 for Sport England which falls within the permitted timescales). This report updates members about improvement activity which has been delivered and which is scheduled to take place across both awards.

Recommendation:

That the Board note the report.

Actions:

Officers will work with Sport England and Arts Council England to co-design and deliver Improvement activity until March 2021.

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LGA Improvement Activity 2020/21

Background

Sport England

1. The award from Sport England to the LGA to deliver the Leadership Essentials Programme for Sport and Physical Activity has been repurposed to deliver an online improvement programme for officers. The decision was taken to focus on officers in the first instance due to the operational nature of the pandemic, however, the plan is to deliver a programme for elected members early next year, which we would welcome your views on.
2. During the initial crisis, the LGA and Sport England worked together to quickly develop a COVID –19 response programme for alumni of the flagship Leadership Essentials programme. In total 22 events took place between April and September 2020. The purpose of the programme was to provide a space for officers to share learning, concerns and for the LGA and Sport England to identify the challenges of COVID-19 and to learn from delegates about what they were experiencing on the ground and how we could develop their leadership skills to act as leaders of place in a post-COVID-19 world. The programme was well received and additional elements such as action learning sets and continued leadership skill development have been devised to keep supporting this group.
3. In response to the issues raised during the COVID-19 response programme, we developed in partnership with Sport England, a refreshed Leadership Essentials programme for officers, this is currently being delivered, with first cohort recently completed and a further two cohorts planned for January and April.

Arts Council England

4. Despite having to reprioritise planned expenditure towards their Covid-19 emergency response fund, Arts Council England were able to commit £40 000 to continue our well-regarded improvement programme for culture and libraries. In partnership with ACE, we have refreshed the programme for councillors and officers to help them champion cultural activity in their local area and in a Covid-19 context.
5. Due to current Government regulations and guidelines, all improvement activity across both Sport England and ACE contracts is being delivered virtually until both contracts end in March 2021.

Planned activity

Sport England

6. The LGA is currently in the process of piloting an online version of the Leadership Essentials programme for officers. The refreshed content explores a number of key challenges, including: health inequalities, financial uncertainty, leisure facilities, whilst also exploring the opportunities COVID-19 has created to embed sport and physical activity in wider council service areas and corporate agendas (climate change, obesity, inactivity, burdens on health and social care).
7. The following activity is planned:
 - 7.1. Cohort 1 (9 November 2020 – 4 December 2020): Has been completed recently with 18 delegates attending from 9 councils, 1 trust, and 8 Active Partnerships. Feedback is being collated and will be reported at the next Board meeting.
 - 7.2. Cohort 2 (January - February 2020): we are in the process of recruiting 20 delegates from a combination of councils, trusts, and Active Partnerships.
 - 7.3. Cohort 3 (April – May 2020) we are in the process of recruiting 20 delegates from a combination of councils, trusts, and Active Partnerships.
8. The LGA has identified the need to deliver a programme for elected members. We are in early conversations with Sport England around a programme for councillors, which is likely to take place between January and March 2021. Board members are invited to identify key issues that they feel delegates on the councillor programme will wish to hear about and the leadership skills which would be useful to them.

Arts Council England: 2020/21

9. The LGA have been awarded a grant of £40,000 to deliver a series of online activity between September 2020 and March 2021. £30,000 has been allocated to libraries and £10,000 allocated to culture.
10. The programme is currently being delivered to support both officers and councillors to learn from the challenges of COVID-19, and support delegates to think through how innovation can be applied to the upcoming period of recovery.
11. The following events have taken place:
 - 11.1. 2 x library best practice seminars attended by 18 officers and 14 councillors. These focused on supporting shielded and vulnerable communities, and supporting digital innovation. Case studies were provided by Norfolk County Council, Reading Borough Council, and Warwickshire County Council.
 - 11.2. 2 x library advocacy workshops, one on public health (65 delegates) and one on education and skills (936 delegates).
12. The following events are still to take place:

- 12.1. 1 x [library advocacy workshop on economic renewal](#), 11 January 2021.
- 12.2. 4 x Leadership Essentials for councillors (14 January 2021 – 24 February 2021).
We are currently recruiting up to 20 councillors onto the programme, which will take place over four separate sessions.
13. A peer challenge for Nottinghamshire has been arranged for 1 – 2 February 2021, following an earlier postponement due to Covid-19. Oxfordshire is also awaiting a rescheduled peer challenge.
14. For 2020/21, we have received funding for 3 recovery and renewal panels, which will be focused on learning from the impact of Covid-19. Because of this, we did not openly advertise as usual but worked with ACE to identify 15 services with interesting work who were invited to bid for a panel. The following councils have now been awarded a panel:
 - 14.1. Bradford City Council – 20 January 2021
 - 14.2. Kent County Council – TBC
 - 14.3. South Tyneside Council – TBC.
15. A review of the Culture Leadership Essentials from the past two years is being undertaken. All findings and insights will be reviewed to support the ongoing development of the programme.
16. In order to increase awareness of our improvement work, and share the learning beyond those able to attend as delegates, we have refreshed our webpages to set out our [Covid-19 related improvement work](#) and our regular [improvement work for culture, tourism and sport](#). This sits alongside some of the toolkits the Board has commissioned.

Financial Implications

17. Due to the necessity to move to an online programme and a number of funds rolling forward from the 2019/20 award to the 2020/21 award, we expect the Leadership Essentials Programme for Sport and Physical Activity to incur an underspend. We will shortly be starting conversations with Sport England about how best we utilise this underspend and potentially roll it forward to next year's award, as we hope to negotiate a new agreement for the 2021/22 Leadership Essentials Programme. To date, we expect to spend in the region of £175 000 against the Sport England award total value of £263 550.
18. The ACE programme is currently on track to be delivered within the planned budget.

Next steps

19. Officers will deliver the programme as outlined above.

20. Board members are invited to advise on the knowledge and skills councillors will require to better support them lead the sport and physical activity sector through a period of recovery and renewal. These will then be fed into early discussions and developments with Sport England.

21. The LGA recognises the importance of addressing the underrepresentation of BAME communities in leadership positions in both the culture and sport sector. Both programme areas will need to build this into their design, communication and delivery moving forward. We will work with the Board's equality champion and sector experts to develop this further.