

Chair's Report from Cllr Ian Stephens, Chair Culture, Tourism and Sport Board to Councillors' Forum

1. I am delighted to have been appointed Chair of the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board. The Scottish referendum, 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta, and a general election, provides a unique context for this year's work programme. I have written to relevant Ministers and the Chairs of VisitEngland, Arts Council England, English Heritage and Sport England to reinforce our shared priorities and the value of our strong relationships, and am looking forward to early meetings. Austerity makes good joint working between local government, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the agencies ever more important.

2015 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference

2. I am delighted to confirm that next year's Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference will be Tuesday 3 March – Wednesday 4 March at Durham. We will build on the success of last year's event in Portsmouth, which attracted the highest number of delegates in recent years (170). For the first time, the Secretary of State for Culture and the chairs of VisitEngland, Arts Council England, Sport England and English Heritage all attended and gave plenary speeches.
3. As 2015 marks the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta, it is very fitting that we are coming together in Durham, home to three copies. The conference is an exciting opportunity to set out a compelling vision to an incoming government for the future of publicly funded culture, tourism and sport – how it can shape identity in a potential new constitutional settlement, rejuvenate democracy, and in the important context of continued austerity – how it can help to tackle the most intractable and costly economic and social challenges the country faces. We will also give delegates access to the latest innovation and delivery models.
4. We will be continuing to work very closely with Cllr Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council and Vice Chair of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, in planning the event.

2014/15 Culture and Sport Improvement Offer

5. I am very pleased that the Board is once again able to offer a comprehensive support and improvement offer to culture and sport portfolio holders, in line with the sector-led approach led by the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board. We plan to reach over 100 portfolio holders through a mix of Leadership Essential Programmes, one-day leadership seminars and peer challenges on key issues including the transformation of library services, new delivery models for culture and the future of sports provision and links to public health. The activity is externally funded by Arts Council England and Sport England.
6. I look forward to working with LGA colleagues and to the CTS Board making positive progress for councils across its remit.

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