

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – End of Year Report

Background

1. The LGA had continued to advocate for the critical role of culture, tourism and sport (CTS) services to communities during the pandemic, and in the recovery period.
2. In particular, the Board's push for engagement with DCMS had significantly strengthened the relationship compared to 2020, with CTS lead members meeting the Secretary of State for DCMS, Minister for arts and culture, and the Minister for sport and tourism. Regular meetings also took place with Neil Mendoza, Commissioner for Cultural Recovery, and Ian Leete, Senior Adviser, had been appointed to the Tourism Industry Council to provide a local government perspective.
3. Regular DCMS meetings at both Ministerial and officer level was in place across each part of the portfolio, helping DCMS to understand the critical importance of councils to delivering their CTS objectives. This would strengthen DCMS' ability to advocate across government for investment within services, which offered many opportunities and benefits to residents.
4. Recent announcements in the Levelling Up white paper and UK Shared Prosperity Fund prospectus gave the clearest Government recognition of this in a long time, with both funds identifying culture, sport and heritage as one of the three objectives they aimed to support. The CTS Board were working with DCMS, the arm's length funding bodies, and sector stakeholders to develop practical support for councils to develop strong bids within those areas.
5. Key government or parliamentary strategies had been published, including new strategies from Sport England and Arts Council England, as well as a House of Lords report on a National Plan for Sport and the Independent Review of Destination Management Organisations. All four publications recognised the critical role of local government to delivering their objectives and made explicit mention of the LGA's role and recommendations.
6. The LGA had also begun work to outline a strategic vision for these services, identifying challenges and opportunities for these services over the next five to ten years. The Board's first priority had been ensuring the sustainability of sporting and physical activity services, which had been particularly hit by loss of income and rising energy prices. Following on from the success in securing £100 million for the sector in 2020, the LGA had influenced the developing of the [Moving Communities Platform](#) which for the first time captured usage of facilities and placed a social value on each visit, allowing significantly more informed local and national investment decisions. In particular, the

LGA was successful in securing the capture of diversity data as part of the returns, offering better understanding of the demographic reach of services.

Alongside the strategic vision work, the joint LGA, APSE and CLOA report [“Securing the future of public sport and leisure services”](#), had been published, which was launched in parliament on 14th Sept 2021. The report findings and recommendations were based on an extensive consultation with over 260 local government representatives, leisure providers, arm’s length bodies, national governing bodies and the Local Government Physical Activity Partnership (LGPAP). The recommendations reflected what the sector had asked to be changed, in order to make public sport and leisure services sustainable, and to realise its potential to deliver on a wide range of national and local policy objectives. The LGA had also produced a [slide deck to support local conversations and raise the profile of the service](#) and highlight its unique contribution to community wellbeing. This work was being supplemented by additional sector-specific briefings on key issues such as reaching fewer active communities, diversifying funding sources and working across council boundaries. The Board had also influenced the design of new funds announced to support [public parks](#), [tennis courts](#), and [multi-sport pitches](#) so that councils could achieve a greater impact with the money available.

7. On the cultural and heritage side, the [Commission on Culture and Local Government](#) had been launched. It looked into the role locally funded culture could play in pandemic recovery and aimed to raise the profile of the work councils and their partners undertook at a local level to support a thriving cultural ecosystem. Led by Baroness Lola Young and supported by 15 commissioners from across the culture, funding and local government sectors, it would collect evidence on four key themes - inclusive economic recovery; health inequalities; education skills and social mobility; and place - over the course of 2022 and reporting in December.
8. The LGA had supported Board Members in their work with the creative industries, following on from publication of the [Creative Places](#) guide in 2020, which included commissioning a report to help combined authorities and groups of councils working at a regional level to understand their role in maximising the growth of the sector and ways of working with their constituent authorities on the agenda. The LGA regularly engaged with the Creative Industries Council in relation to the upcoming Creative Sector Vision and had been working with equivalent teams at DCMS to support their work on the Create Growth programme so that it worked for councils.
9. Other culture-related activity during 2021/22 had focused on ensuring councils were able to play a full part in the many festivals and celebrations taking place in 2022, including the [Platinum Jubilee](#) and Unboxed festival. This included briefing government and organisers on the role councils played in enabling local celebrations and running online events to help councils understand when and where they could contribute. The LGA also

ensured that council representatives had helped design the route for the Queen's Baton Relay alongside the Commonwealth Games.

10. On tourism, the LGA successfully influenced the [Independent review of destination management organisations](#), which adopted recommendations for a tiered approach, similar to Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations. The review was currently with Government to consider the recommendations. However, the funding recommendation was not announced as part of the Spending Review 2022, so the LGA would need to continue to advocate for the effective implementation of the review. The LGA had also contributed to a DCMS policy sprint in the North East, exploring ways to turbo-charge the regional visitor economy.
11. The LGA had continued to support specific services within the Board's portfolio, such as libraries. In his role as Libraries Champion, Cllr Tom Hollis represented the LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board as Co-Chair of a new Councillor Sounding Board for libraries, along with ACE Director, Libraries Sue Williamson. Members of the group would be updated on progress against the Single Digital Presence programme and asked for comment on other national library programmes, which could include library accreditation and the library 'assessment strategy', reviewing what information was needed from libraries to collect to really capture their impact on communities.
12. Board members continued to play an active role in engaging with key sector stakeholders, with updates and communications provided by:
 - 12.1. London Marathon Charitable Trust – Cllr Richard Henry
 - 12.2. Tourism Alliance – Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson (-16 March '22)/Cllr Chris White (March '22-current)
 - 12.3. Coastal Special Interest Group – Cllr David Jeffels
 - 12.4. Creative Industries Council – Cllr Phil Seeva
13. Finally, the [sector-led improvement programmes for councillors and officers](#), funded by Arts Council England and Sport England continued to go from strength to strength. Both agencies had committed further funding for 2022/23 and expanding some elements.
14. A monthly e-bulletin was also produced, summarising key developments in CTS policy and practice.

Issues

15. The over-arching challenge for the sector remained to be funding, with ongoing pressure on council budgets. Both sport and cultural facilities were on average seeing a reduced footfall compared to pre-pandemic levels which was impacting on services' ability to generate earned income. For sport, it meant that the previous surplus that could be used for other public services was no longer available, impacting council budgets more generally.

16. The cost-of-living increases were expected to challenge the ability to generate income still further, whilst many council staff would themselves be affected by rising costs. The LGA had recently written to a number of secretaries of state, including for DCMS, outlining the impact of the pressures on frontline staff. It is expected that the rising cost of living would be an issue that continued over to the work of the next Board in the 2022/23 cycle.
17. Sport was also particularly affected by rising energy costs and the LGA continued to work with partners to quantify the impact and engage with Government to seek support. A short-term briefing on improving management of energy costs had been produced but a long-term change programme was needed to ensure that facilities were energy-efficient and sustainable. This was a continuation and natural expansion of existing campaign on refreshing the leisure estate.

Implications for Wales

18. The majority of work is England-focused, reflecting the devolution of all CTS policy in Wales and the existence of separate funding bodies. The CTS team met regularly with Culture and Leisure Officers Wales (CLOW) to understand the Welsh landscape, and CTS best practice publications aimed to either include Welsh examples or transferrable learning to support delivery across England and Wales.

Financial Implications

19. The Board's work had been delivered within its policy budget.

Next steps

20. Following on from Member feedback, officers would refine the programme for the Summer.