

Meeting: -

Date: -

CTS workplan 2022

Purpose of report

For direction

Summary

This paper sets out priority issues facing the culture, tourism, and sport sectors, as well as existing and planned work for the LGA culture, tourism and sport (CTS) team to deliver. It also outlines the staff and financial resources available to the Board.

Board members are invited to discuss the issues and opportunities, and confirm the priorities for the Board and CTS team over the 2022/23 cycle.

The achievements of the Board and team in 2021/22 are set out in the [paper discussed at the June 2022 board meeting](#).

Is this report confidential?

No

Recommendation/s

1. That Board members note the financial and staff resources available to the Board
2. Board members agree the priority list of issues and actions.

Contact details

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CTS workplan 2022

Background

1. At the time of writing, there is significant uncertainty about the direction of national policy. Members might wish to reflect whether the current balance of work is the right one, and whether there are any gaps or areas that should be addressed differently.
2. It is likely that the most pressing priority for an incoming government is to address the cost of living crisis in the short term. Work is already underway to articulate the particular challenges facing CTS services and stakeholders, and we expect this to be a busy area of work in the coming months. This may mean that other planned work may be subject to a delay as we flex the team's resources.
3. Following the launch of the [Signals of the Future](#) report at the LGA annual conference, the LGA will be taking a fresh look at the long term issues facing the country and what local government's role is in addressing them. This will also support our work to influence manifestos in the lead up to the next general election. The Board is already well positioned in this space, thanks to its foresight in commissioning the Culture Commission, Securing the Future report and other projects. In their consideration of the work programme, members might wish to consider how the Board's findings and recommendations might feed into the LGA's wider work.

Resources

4. The Board has access to one Senior Adviser and two part-time Advisers to deliver policy support against the Board's priorities. We have also secured a part-time National Graduate placement for six months. Their work is supported and overseen by the Principal Policy Adviser, who is also responsible for the City Regions and People and Places Boards.
5. The Board can additionally call on the expertise of a senior media officer, public affairs officer, and digital communications officer, as part of their wider portfolio of work
6. The Board has £55 000 allocated to it for policy work. £20 000 has been allocated towards the work of the Culture Commission, and a further £20 000 towards improvement support on the visitor economy. The remainder is unallocated.

Proposal

7. Given the policy context set out above, and the Boards' existing commitments, it is proposed that the following workstreams make up the Board's work programme for the year:
 - 7.1. Gathering evidence on and supporting councils to respond to the growing cost of living crisis and other financial pressures.
 - 7.2. Delivering and communicating the findings of the Commission on Culture and Local Government in order to strengthen local government's profile in culture and the creative industries.
 - 7.3. Developing the CTS contribution to meeting net zero and climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.
 - 7.4. Understanding and addressing the disparities of access and outcomes to CTS services from an equality, diversity, and inclusion perspective.
 - 7.5. Building on our work to make the case for investment in sports, physical activity, and parks.
 - 7.6. Officers will also continue the day-to-day business of the Board, including improvement support, media activity, stakeholder engagement and parliamentary activity.

Issues and actions

8. The primary issue facing CTS services over at least the next six months will be **cost of living and associated price rises** in energy and other components. The challenges are twofold - adapting services to best support their communities, such as with adapting libraries to act as warm banks; and responding to the pressures that rising prices place on services themselves, which will also affect those services which rely on earned income as their users' disposable incomes are squeezed.
9. Work on the cost of living issue will be informed by the [LGA's wider response](#). It will need to respond to the changing situation, but can build on existing good work. For instance, we already know there are particular challenges for leisure centres who are now paying, on average, £2.50 for every £1 previously spent on energy. We are working with partners to make sure these issues are understood by DCMS, DLUHC and HM Treasury.
10. The Moving Communities platform, established as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, already captures data on the impact on leisure centres and gives us a significant advantage compared to negotiations during the early parts of the pandemic. Our '[Securing the future of public sport and leisure services](#)' publication also provides a roadmap for using the current challenge and any associated funding to help accelerate the transformation of the sector, particularly around decarbonisation targets.

11. Actions:

- 11.1. **Collate information on the impact on services and raise with DCMS/DLUHC/HMT.** There are a wide range of conversations going on with civil servants and sector stakeholders about the issue. On sport, with swimming pools particularly affected, there is a fortnightly working group with DCMS, ukactive, and Sport England which has collected key data and is developing a support package request to put before the new Ministers.
- 11.2. Engagement on other policy areas is less formalised but regular conversations are held on libraries and museums, while the visitor economy is discussed at the Tourism Industry Council..
- 11.3. We are also meeting with DCMS, alongside the LGA's Head of Workforce, to raise a number of **recruitment and retention challenges** facing local government as a whole. This is compounded by planned increases to the National Minimum Wage, which will bring local government pay scales close to the minimum level, making local government a less attractive employer. All services report shortages of staff.
- 11.4. **Collect and publish case studies and research** on the LGA's new [cost of living hub](#). Initial case studies have been collated and presented on the hub, including Libraries Connected's [summary of how libraries are responding](#) to the situation.
- 11.5. **Brief and support the sector.** We are publishing the first of five briefings following on from 'Securing the future' which covers alternative finance models for sport and leisure services (others include working across council boundaries, supporting community ownership, reaching less active groups, and promoting health and wellbeing). We have also published a guide, with ukactive, on [responding to the energy challenge](#).
12. The [Culture Commission](#) is the Board's high profile, high impact piece of work, having secured positive engagement from DCMS and attention from a range of stakeholders beyond core CTS sectors. It is starting to formulate its recommendations to Government and councils, as well as the public narrative for its findings. The ambition is to launch the recommendations in December 2022, but there will be significant follow-on work required to deliver on and embed the findings within the sector, lobby Government to deliver on what support might be needed from them, and ensure its messages are embedded with all political parties as they develop their manifestos.
13. This is a resource intensive piece of work and is expected to be the primary focus of one of the Adviser roles for at least the next five months. The NGDP graduate will also be tasked with supporting this work.
14. Other cultural work will include feeding into the new [Public Libraries Strategy being developed by Baroness Sanderson](#). This will include attending at least four roundtables, as well as additional engagement.

15. The Board will also seek the expansion of the [Blue plaque scheme](#) to cover the whole of England, and a meeting is being sought with English Heritage to discuss this.
16. **Climate change** remains a cross-cutting theme for all LGA Boards and CTS work will need to reflect this. As mentioned, the sport and leisure work on cost of living also provides a positive opportunity to accelerate the sector's transition towards a low carbon and sustainable service – this is highlighted in all conversations with DCMS, and in our communications to the sector.
17. **Actions:**
- 17.1. **Highlight and promote the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund**, which provides key funding for transformation, and other relevant funding streams. However, this is limited to adaptation and not new builds, which the leisure estate needs, so we are calling for expansion of the Fund's objectives. We also showcase the work of places like Exeter, Bristol and Lancaster which have adopted sustainable practices. Some sector specific funding is also available, such as the Green Libraries Fund.
- 17.2. **Promote the LGA [sector support offer on climate change and sustainability](#)**, equipping heads of CTS services to provide leadership and develop their thinking on how services can respond. There are also action learning sets which have been promoted to CTS teams, while some elements have been incorporated in the ACE and Sport England funded programmes. We are also publishing case studies for the hub, including those mentioned in 15.1.
- 17.3. **Collaborate with partners**, such as the Natural History Museum. Given the limited resources within the CTS team, other organisations may be best placed to provide advice and support on climate change. We have recently worked with the NHM to promote a tour of their Arctic exhibition to non-museum locations, and they are now exploring a webinar for 'town takeovers' to develop community-led solutions to climate change, which we will promote to LGA members.
18. **Equalities, inclusion and diversity** is the third priority issue for CTS to work on. Many cultural venues are recognised as reaching only a part of their community, despite individual examples of excellent work with communities who are less likely to access culture. Similarly, sport engagement data shows significant disparities between the activities of some groups, including women, disabled people, and those from different ethnic communities. Lower income households are also less active. It is critical that all CTS work considers both the impact on inclusion, but also the opportunities to address imbalances in access and experience.
19. **Actions:**

- 19.1. **All CTS briefings will explicitly consider equalities**, inclusion and diversity, with the CTS Equalities Champion will lead scrutiny of this work. Our events will also ensure that we engage a diverse range of speakers.
 - 19.2. **Lobbying work with DCMS emphasises the particular importance of CTS services to those on lower incomes**, particularly during this period of financial pressure, **but the evidence base is patchy**. We have worked with Sport England to collect this data on the Moving Communities platform, but more needs to be done in analysing this and communicating any implications to services. Data collection of this kind must also be built into ongoing conversations around a similar platform for libraries.
 - 19.3. **A focus on case studies that demonstrate effective inclusion practices, or new ways of working with communities**, will be prioritised for the LGA website and for showcasing at events, including the leadership training with ACE and Sport England.
 - 19.4. **Collaboration with partners** will continue to be key, as we recognise that other partners have more experience and insight into this work. For instance, we have supported Libraries Connected in developing their training programme to diversify library leadership, and will identify similar opportunities during 2022/23. Our Culture Commission has also opened up more in depth conversations about inclusion and accessibility which will shape the Commission's final report.
20. Our **sport and physical activity work, including parks**, is further advanced, following the publication of 'Securing the future' last year. However, work to capitalise and deliver on the recommendations continues, both with support to the sector and engagement with partners to lobby Government for the needed funding and support from them. With the pressure on public finances expected to rise, making the case for funding will become even more difficult, and we will need to ensure our proposals continue to make use of the most robust evidence.
21. **Actions:**
- 21.1. **Five sector briefings** on: alternative finance models for sport and leisure services; working across council boundaries; supporting community ownership; reaching less active groups; and promoting health and wellbeing.
 - 21.2. **A parliamentary briefing event**, with the APPG for Sport, to raise awareness of the importance of the sector, the risks facing it, and how it can be supported to adapt and thrive.
22. There are two key pieces of **work on the visitor economy**, which remains in a fragile state post-Covid.
23. **Actions:**
24. Following the Board's effective influencing of the recommendations of the [Independent review of destination management organisations](#), we will focus

on its **implementation** in order to help councils and government to deliver the best results for the visitor economy.

25. **Responding to the [tourist accommodation registration scheme](#) call for evidence** and any future development work on the design of regulations.
26. Discussions with officers and partners have highlighted a gap in the **support** available for officers working on tourism and related issues. We have secured funding through the LGA's improvement contract with DLUHC and some levelling up improvement funding, with the aim of beginning the programme later this year.
27. In partnership with the LGA's improvement team, we continue to deliver leadership support for councillors and officers on arts and culture, and sport and physical activity funded by Arts Council England and Sport England respectively. Please see the accompanying paper on these programmes for more information on them.
28. We continue to **engage with an extensive range of partners across all CTS services**, achieving engagement with Government that could not be achieved by the LGA as a single organisation. It also enables us to influence and align requests into Government, most notably influencing requests around business rates reductions to recognise that these are an important funding stream for local government, who must be compensated for these reliefs offered to businesses.
29. We support ad hoc **media requests and parliamentary briefings, including select committee responses**. We are currently preparing to give evidence before a House of Lords committee on the role of local government in supporting the creative industries. While we maintain good relationships with Committee clerks, and assess the Parliamentary agenda for opportunities, this work remains largely reactive and team capacity must be adapted when priority issues arise.

Implications for Wales

30. Policy for all CTS services is devolved to the Welsh administration, who also have their own funding bodies. As the LGA is only funded to deliver lobbying work for Welsh authorities into the UK government, this limits the work of the team on Welsh issues. However, we retain good contacts with Chief Leisure Officers Wales (CLOW) and engage with individual Welsh members as required.

Financial Implications

31. All existing work is on track to be delivered within budgets. The visitor economy work has not yet begun and the £20 000 allocated has therefore not been spent.
32. £15 000 of the policy budget is currently unallocated.

Equalities implications

33. All pieces of work outlined above have a strong equalities element built into them, with a particular focus on this during the Culture Commission conversations. As pieces of work develop, we will highlight their specific implications for equalities in the relevant briefings.

Next steps

34. Board members are invited to note existing workstreams, identify any gaps, and, if so, discuss how resources should be reallocated from their current work.

35. Board members are also invited to discuss any key narratives they would like to feature in LGA press work and media.