

End of year report, September 2022 - June 2023

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This paper outlines the Board's main activities and achievements during the past year, covering media and press work, conference and events, leadership training and peer challenges, policy impacts, publications, and engagement with outside bodies.

LGA Plan Theme: Efficient business management

Recommendation(s)

That the Board notes the achievements and activities of the past year and identify any priorities to be presented to the new Board when it convenes in September.

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Background

1. The Board is required to review its achievements at the last Board meeting of the 2022/23 cycle.
2. The text below provides highlights of the CTS Board and team's work over the year, but is not a comprehensive list. The CTS team responds on a daily basis to a wide range of issues facing councils and their partners, which this year has included issues between the Church of England and council archives, supporting council archaeology services on planning consultations, exploratory work on a national blue plaque scheme, Royal celebrations and commemorations, written to new Ministers, and supporting councils to respond to the cost-of-living challenges facing communities.

Culture

3. The **LGA's Independent Commission on Culture and Local Government** published its final report, [Cornerstones of Culture](#) in December 2022. 220 people signed-up to attend the launch event, with 70 of those being in-person. The launch posts on the LGA's corporate Twitter received 49,554 impressions and 977 engagements, placing them in the top 10 posts of the year. The Cornerstones of Culture report was the 6th most viewed webpage on the LGA website during the week of its launch. The work of the Culture Commission also included the publication of a case study resource of over 50 case studies, a series of four short films profiling council cultural services and a series of illustrations based on the Commission's discussions.
4. The report has received a number of Parliamentary references and was specifically mentioned by Arts and Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson in his appearance on Front Row to discuss funding for culture in March 2023. Prior to the work of the Commission, the vital role of local government in supporting cultural infrastructure was not regularly recognised at a national level: following the work of the Commission, we have seen the fact that councils are the biggest public funder of culture referenced repeatedly across Parliament, stakeholder publications and wider media.
5. The Spring 2023 Budget announced that the **temporary higher headline rates of relief for cultural taxes** including Theatres Tax relief (TTR), Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR) and Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief (MGETR) will be extended for two additional years, a recommendation of the LGA. The rates will be gradually reduced down to normal rates by 1 April 2026.

6. In January 2023, Arts Council England announced details of the next rounds of the programmes that make up the Cultural Investment Fund. These are: the **Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND)**; the **Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF)**; and the **Cultural Development Fund (CDF)**. New rounds of MEND and LIF opened in early 2023 with £22.6 million available through this round of MEND, and £10.5 million through LIF (funding amounts may be subject to DCMS business planning). This will be the final round of LIF, while further applications for MEND will take place in early 2024, alongside another round of CDF. The LGA supported sector lobbying for these funds, and has undertaken a communication and support role for the sector following the announcement.
7. **Energy Bill Relief Scheme.** In January the Government announced the outcome of the review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, and published guidance. The scheme comprises two elements: support for all businesses, charities, and public sector organisations, and support at a higher level for energy and trade intensive industries. Museums, libraries and archives, historical sites and buildings, and zoos are included in this latter group of eligible sectors. The LGA was part of cross-sector advocacy efforts in favour of their inclusion.
8. The LGA has signed a new [Joint Statement with Arts Council England](#), which sets out how Arts Council England and the Local Government Association (LGA) will work together over the period from 2023-2025. Its purpose is to outline our shared vision for the contribution that arts, museums and libraries make to the nation, to places, and for people and how the two partners aspire to work together to realise it. This is the third joint statement signed by Arts Council England and the Local Government Association. It not only reflects the ongoing importance of collaboration between the development body for arts and culture and the membership body for local government, but also the strengthening and deepening of the relationship, which is reflected in the Arts Council's increased focus on place and everyday creative activity in their most recent strategy Let's Create.
9. The team has worked closely with the Creative Industries Council as they develop the [Government's Creative Industries Sector Vision](#), launched on 14 June, and which includes a commitment to "strengthen our collaboration with the Local Government Association, local authorities and leaders to support them in the development of local creative industries strategies...". This will build on our November 2022 publication on [Combined Authorities and the Creative Industries](#).
10. The LGA was named as one of only three organisations to be invited to every session held by [Baroness Sanderson as she developed her recommendations for the Government's forthcoming Libraries Strategy](#). Each session was attended by an LGA

Officer or LGA councillor (drawn from the CTS Board or the Library Sounding Board), and one deep dive session was held at the LGA offices. While not yet published, it is believed that several LGA recommendations will be put forward for inclusion in the new strategy. The LGA has also been referenced in the new Defra rural strategy as a partner to develop advice and support for rural libraries.

11. The Board Libraries Champion continues to co-chair the **Library Sounding Board** with Arts Council England, bringing together portfolio holders for libraries to discuss developments and issues facing library services.

Sport and physical activity

12. The CTS Board consistently lobbied the Government to urgently provide **support for swimming pools and leisure facilities**. This included meeting with the Sports Minister, Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP in March 2023, to press the government to recognise the pressure of rising fuel bills on council run pools, highlighting that energy costs are up 300 per cent for some leisure centres. We also encouraged councils to write to their local MP and collaborated with key local government and sport sector stakeholders on joint letters to the Chancellor and Ministers.
13. As a result of our collective lobbying, the **£63 million Swimming Pool Support Fund** was announced in the Spring Budget to help publicly-owned swimming pools manage the increasing cost pressures. Of this, £23 million is for revenue costs and £40 million is for capital funding for energy efficiency improvements. This is a significant achievement given that public swimming pools and leisure centres were only one of two sectors to receive emergency support in the budget. Although this will not fully cover additional energy costs, the support is welcomed by the sector. We are now supporting Sport England to design and launch the fund which is due to go live at the end of June.
14. On behalf of the CTS Board, officers sit on the **Moving Communities Board** and contribute to strategic plans to promote the value of and increase the visibility of Moving Communities, which was acknowledged as critical to securing funding for the sector. The data provided by councils and leisure providers to [Moving Communities](#) was crucial to proving the importance of swimming pools to local communities and was instrumental in demonstrating the challenging financial position facing the sector and the potential loss in participation and social value, helping to facilitate the £63 million swimming pool support fund announced in the Spring Budget. The data also supports councils, providers and policymakers to take informed decisions to keep communities active and the recovery of public leisure services.

15. We produced [a briefing note with ukactive on the impact of utilities on leisure services](#) for councils and for operators running council-owned facilities.
16. We published the [LGA guide: Harnessing culture and sport to deliver social prescribing and improve health outcomes](#) it shares ideas and case studies to support councils to harness innovation in culture and leisure related services to deliver social prescribing initiatives.
17. We published the [LGA guide: Identifying additional financing options for public sport and leisure services](#) it highlights additional financing options to help sustain the sport and leisure sector and showcases learning from councils who are already doing this. A further guide on Supporting community ownership is due to be launched at the LGA Annual conference to coincide with the policy session '[Leisure centres: fit for the future](#)' on 5 June 2023.

Visitor economy

18. The LGA fed into the consultation on **reforming destination management organisations (DMOs)** – a long-standing call for action from the LGA. The resulting report adopted many of the LGA recommendations, placing DMOs on a more strategic footing (and now to be called Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs)), and providing a £4 million pilot in the North East. We are continuing to work with VisitEngland and tourism partners on the rollout, including hosting a [webinar with VisitEngland](#) to update councils on the rollout.
19. Following LGA lobbying, Government consulted on **introducing a tourist accommodation scheme in England to regulate the increase in short-term lets**. The [LGA responded to this](#) making several recommendations for regulation, which in turn led to two further consultations – on [introducing a registration scheme for short-term lets](#), and [introducing a use class for short term lets](#). Government will now consider the responses before taking further action, although the registration scheme is now a commitment in the Levelling Up Bill.
20. The LGA's senior adviser has been reappointed to the **Government's Tourism Industry Council**, providing advice to Government on management and support of the visitor economy, and ensuring local government views and capabilities are considered.

CTS Annual conference 2023

21. The annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference 2023 was held on 15th March 2023. Keynote speeches were given by LGA President and Paralympian Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and Baroness Lola Young, Chair of the LGA's Commission on Culture and Local Government. Talks from across the day demonstrated the huge contribution culture, tourism and sport can make to delivering on levelling up, and providing cost of living support, and colleagues ended the day with a walking tour of the impressively renovated London Coliseum.
22. 85 delegates registered to attend the 2023 conference – this is on par with the last in-person conference in 2020. The final net profit for the conference was £12,014.
23. The LGA Board and team also continue to offer free webinars to members throughout the year on various relevant topics and in support of Board objectives. Please see Annex D for details on events supported this year.

Improvement

24. The LGA continues to deliver an improvement programme for Arts Council England and one for Sport England. Cllr Michael Graham has helped to design programmes, while Cllr Peter Golds and Cllr Julie Jones-Evans have presented at them.
25. The [Arts Council England offer](#) includes leadership training for councillors, and for the first year has piloted training for officers, which has been oversubscribed. The programme also includes 3 culture peer challenges, and 10 library peer challenges, which continue to be well regarded and featured in several of Baroness Sanderson's deep dive sessions as good practice.
26. The [Sport England offer](#) continues to focus on leadership training and systems thinking, offering training for councillors and a separate programme for officers, including those based in trusts and Active Partnerships.
27. Discussions are underway with both partners over contracts for 2023/4 and both programmes are expected to continue in some form.
28. A pilot leadership session for officers has been commissioned on the **visitor economy**, using the LGA policy budget and is expected to start in September 2023. It will bring together 20 officers in an action learning format and cover key topics, such as strategies, data and evidence, sustainability, and inclusive tourism.

Media

29. The CTS Board shares the services of a Senior Media Relations Officer and a Digital Campaigns Marketing Adviser, who undertake a range of proactive and reactive items. Over the Board cycle, the team have engaged with most of the national media outlets, including the Guardian, Telegraph, Daily Mail, BBC, Sky News, and the Sun, with both reactive responses and proactive stories, including contributing to editorial items. The teams work also appears in sector press such as the Local Government Chronicle and Municipal Journal, particularly around the Culture Commission.
30. This year has included significant reputational management around council's contribution to holding street parties for the Coronation, as well as articulating the pressures on budgets that are leading to some service reductions, and the choices councils have to consider when hosting events in public spaces.
31. Most proactive media work this year has focused the issues facing leisure services, with most national papers including coverage of our partnership work with sports sector organisations at some point. A selection of key messages and articles are set out in Annex B to illustrate the Board's reach and impact.
32. In addition to supporting the leisure stories, the social media focus was on promoting the work of the Culture Commission and the contribution of councils to culture. Details of the impact and reach of these activities, as well as download figures for this year's publications, are included in Annex C.
33. The team have also communicated regularly with member councils through the weekly bulletins from Cllr James Jamieson to Leaders and Portfolio Holders, and from Mark Lloyd to Chief Executives and Directors. The monthly CTS e-bulletin has been delivered each month and reaches over 13 000 subscribers. The team has also secured seven articles in First magazine from Board members and partner organisations (see paragraphs 6-12 in Annex B).

Outside Bodies

34. The Board's work continues to be supported by members undertaking a liaison role with key stakeholders or acting as a point of contact on specialist subjects. During this Board cycle, the following members undertook these roles:
- 34.1. Tourism Alliance – Cllr Chris White (LibDem)
 - 34.2. London Marathon Charitable Trust – Cllr Richard Henry (LAB)
 - 34.3. Coastal SIG – Cllr David Jeffels (CON)

- 34.4. Creative Industries Council – Cllr Phil Seeva (CON)
- 34.5. Library champion – Cllr Julie Jones-Evans (IND)
- 34.6. Improvement Champion – Cllr Michael Graham (LAB)
- 34.7. Chair, Chiles, Webster, Batson Commission working group – Cllr Shabir Pandor (LAB)

Implications for Wales

- 35. Most culture, tourism and sport powers, funding streams, and activities are fully devolved. However, the LGA engages regularly with Culture and Leisure Officers Wales (CLOW) and the WLGA, through quarterly CLOA meetings. Most publications include a Welsh case study, and practical delivery points are usually applicable across boundaries.

Financial Implications

- 36. This year's work has been delivered within budget.

Equalities implications

- 37. The team has ensured that all events and training programmes have featured a representative group of speakers, drawn from different backgrounds and lived experiences, as well as the usual urban/rural, political colour, and type of council considerations.
- 38. The Culture Commission explicitly considered equality and diversity across all of its themes, and there are recommendations for how councils can enhance their reach and engagement, removing barriers to access.
- 39. Inclusion was also a key lobbying issue when discussing the impact of closing leisure facilities on communities. As part of this work, we were able to ensure that the new Moving Communities platform captured demographic data and was able to inform national policy decisions.

Next steps

- 40. Members are invited to:
 - 40.1. Note the significant achievements over the past year
 - 40.2. Identify areas of work that will continue to be a priority for members over the Summer
 - 40.3. Any new areas of work that should be put forward for consideration to the new Board convening in September for the 2023/24 cycle.

ANNEX A

Parliamentary engagement:

1. The team regularly engages with Select Committee inquiries, either through briefings or oral evidence. The public affairs officer covering this portfolio regularly meets with the clerks of relevant committees to ensure local government expertise is considered when inquiries are established, and Cllr Vernon-Jackson has written to Dame Caroline Dinenage as the new Chair of the Culture, Media, and Sport Select Committee.

- 2.

Parliamentary committee/ APPG/ other	Inquiry/ event	Type of engagement	Date
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee	Parks follow-up one-off evidence session	Written evidence	28/06/2022
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee	Parks follow-up one-off evidence session	Oral evidence (Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson)	20/07/2022
Lords Communications & Digital Select Committee	The future of the creative industries	Oral evidence (Cllr Phil Seeva)	08/11/2022
Lords Communications & Digital Select Committee	The future of the creative industries	Written evidence	November 2022

Parliamentary briefings web views:

3. [Developing a tourist accommodation scheme in England](#) - 11 Oct 22

Total page views: 301

Unique page views: 151

4. [Mitigating the impact of rising utility costs on leisure services](#) - 23 Nov 22

Total page views: 834

Unique page views: 408

5. [Government support for leisure centres](#) – 15 Dec 22

Total page views: 598

Unique page views: 305

6. [Debate on Report from the National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee: 'A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing', House of Lords, 9 February 2023](#) – 9 Feb 2023

Total page views: 462

Unique page views: 223

ANNEX B

Culture, tourism and sport board news coverage

Overall council cost pressures

1. During the month of October, we put spokespeople up for a number of interviews to discuss overall council cost pressures in the run up to the Autumn Statement. The interviews focused on pressures more broadly, but our interview briefings included lines on libraries and leisure centres.
 - 1.1. Cllr James Jamieson was interviewed on **BBC News** and **BBC Radio 4 World at One**, and had an article featured in **Politics Home**.
 - 1.2. Cllr Shaun Davies was interviewed on **BBC News**.
 - 1.3. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson quote included in a **BBC News Online** piece looking at the risk of cuts to libraries despite a rise in users.

Warm spaces

2. In November, as winter drew closer, we received a notable number of enquiries and interview requests to discuss the use of warm spaces. Our lines crossed over into housing and public health portfolios, but also included a focus on the use of libraries.
 - 2.1. Cllr Shaun Davies spoke to **BBC News**.
 - 2.2. Cllr David Renard was interviewed on **BBC Radio 4's Today programme**, **BBC Breakfast**, **BBC News** and **BBC regional radio news**.

Cornerstones of Culture

3. Earlier in the year, the LGA's commission on culture and local government launched, with Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson interviewing with **Arts Professional**. After nine months of round tables and the publication of a final report, we secured further trade coverage.
 - 3.1. A comment piece from Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson was published by **Arts Professional** in January.

Leisure centres and rising energy bills

4. The topic that attracted the most media attention during November and into the new year was concerns around the impact of rising energy costs of leisure centres.
 - 4.1. **The Telegraph** ran a piece on the state of swimming pools, referencing the LGA's repeated calls for investment in public sport and leisure facilities.
 - 4.2. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson had a quote included in a **Telegraph** piece on swimming pools potentially closing this winter due to energy bills.

- 4.3. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson took part in a discussion on **BBC Radio 4's Front Row** about museums and leisure centres being impacted by rising costs.
- 4.4. In the second week of January, we issued a response to the Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme which omitted swimming pools from the extra support. Our lines were covered by BBC Sport, The Independent, Mirror and Sun.
- 4.5. In the second week of January, our joint letter with UK Active and others that was sent to Government was reported on, as well as our lines, by BBC Sport, The Guardian and BBC Radio 4's Today programme.
- 4.6. Local Government Chronicle reported our letter to Jeremy Hunt and Michael Gove signed by local government organisations.

Coronation of King Charles

5. In the months leading up to the coronation in May, we received a notable number of media enquiries relating to council preparations. These included a focus on street party applications and fees; rules around bunting and other decorations; and the process for applying for a road closure for the event.
 - 5.1. **The Telegraph, Daily Mail** and **Sun** were all sent comments regarding the above topics on a number of occasions.

First magazine articles

6. [Vital role of culture highlighted](#) – Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, 18 October 2022
7. [Cornerstones of culture](#) – Baroness Lola young, 6 January 2023
8. [Cultural services key to recovery](#) – Editorial team, 6 January 2023
9. ['Complacency' on creative industries](#) – Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, 31 January 2023
10. [Joining the nation in celebration](#) – Kate Groves, Eden Project, 28 February 2023
11. [A better quality of life](#) – Cllr Julie Jones-Evans, 28 February 2023
12. [The local value of the screen sector](#) – Hayley Armstrong, Creative England, 23 May 2023

Web media releases

13. [LGA statement on Budget funding for swimming pools](#)
Total page views: 1,021
Unique page views: 481
14. [Investment in public sports facilities also vital – LGA on sports in schools announcement](#)
Total page views: 224
Unique page views: 120
15. ['Cross-government support needed to address skills shortage in culture and creativity' – LGA statement on Communications and Digital Committee Report on our creative future](#)
Total page views: 195
Unique page views: 110

16. ['Leisure centres and public pools still at risk': LGA statement on energy bills support announcement](#)
Total page views: 777
Unique page views: 385
17. [Culture key to recovery and prosperity: Cornerstones of Culture Report](#)
Total page views: 1,013
Unique page views: 478
18. [Adult activity levels bouncing back: LGA statement on Sport England report](#)
Total page views: 252
Unique page views: 127

ANNEX C

Publications and social media

LGA publications

1. [Cornerstones of culture](#)
Total page views: 8,649
Unique page views: 3,617
2. [Combined authorities and creative industries](#)
Total page views: 655
Unique page views: 323
3. [Harnessing culture and sport to deliver social prescribing and improve health outcomes](#)
Total page views: 1,691
Unique page views: 765

Case studies

4. Sixty-six case studies covering culture, sport and physical activity, and heritage have been collated and added to the [LGA case study bank](#). They gained a combined 6675 page views.

Social media

The LGA's CTS work on social media focused on the two priorities of 2022-23.

5. **Leisure work** - We amplified proactive and reactive work on Twitter and LinkedIn, contributing to **two of our top 5 posts of 2023** so far on the LGA corporate Twitter and LinkedIn. Of these two posts alone, we received a (combined) 100+ RTs, 100+ Likes and 30k impressions.
 - 5.1. <https://twitter.com/LGAcomms/status/1628334247336353795>
 - 5.2. <https://twitter.com/LGAcomms/status/1619990068952956929>
6. **Culture Commission** - We continued to promote the work of the Commission on Culture and Local Government, including the report launch in December 2022.
 - 6.1. In the lead up to the report launch, our **four short films received 4k video views** on Twitter.
 - 6.2. Our [Twitter post on the 'Cornerstones of Culture' report launch](#) reigned in the top 10 tweets of 2022 for the corporate LGA account highlighting our followers' interest in cultural services. The animation received 3.5k views. The posts received a combined 50k impressions and 1k engagements.

Podcast

7. The LGA launched a [podcast episode on cultural services](#) as part of our 'Forget What You Think You Know' series, featuring speakers Bobby Seagull, Baroness Lola Young and Chenine Bhatena. So far, the podcast has received 500 listens.

ANNEX D

Conferences and webinars

LGA events

1. 8 December 2022 - [Culture Commission launch](#).
2. 12 December 2022 - [Learning from Summer Reading Challenge](#), with the Reading Agency.
3. 9 February 2023 - [Implementing the review of destination management organisations](#), with VisitEngland.

Partner events

4. 10 November – [Meeting the challenge of the rising costs of leisure](#), with CLOA.

ANNEX E

Speakers at the Board

1. The Board, including Lead member meetings, has heard from a number of keynote speakers and organisations over the 2022/23 board cycle, including:
 - 1.1. Stuart Andrew MP, Minister for Sport
 - 1.2. Tracey Crouch MP
 - 1.3. Baroness Lola Young
 - 1.4. Sport England
 - 1.5. UKActive
 - 1.6. Street Games
 - 1.7. Lawn Tennis Association
 - 1.8. Football Supporters Association
 - 1.9. VisitEngland
 - 1.10. Arts Council England
 - 1.11. English National Opera
 - 1.12. Libraries Connected
 - 1.13. DCMS Libraries Team
 - 1.14. Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association
 - 1.15. Community Leisure UK
 - 1.16. Chief Archivists in Local Government (CALG)
 - 1.17. Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader, Plymouth City Council
 - 1.18. Plymouth National Portfolio Organisations, including the Box and the Theatre Royal
 - 1.19. LGA Workforce team