

Improvement Programmes

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This paper updates the Board on the improvement programmes, including those delivered under contract for Arts Council England and Sport England.

LGA Plan Theme: Supporting local people and places

Recommendation(s)

That the Board:

- Promote these improvement offers to their councils and colleagues
- Consider volunteering to act as a peer member in support of the programmes
- Identify any future improvement support that could be incorporated into existing programmes, or developed as a new programme in the new financial year.

Contact details

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Improvement Programmes

Background

1. The LGA provides a range of improvement support for councils for physical activity and cultural services.
2. Much of this work is delivered as a result of contracts established with Arts Council England and Sport England. These contracts are reviewed on a regular basis and have grown from around £25 000 in 2016 to their current level, reflecting the positive impact of these programmes on delegates.
3. The LGA also undertakes a small number of improvement activities using core budgets. These are typically pilots activities, exploring the level of demand in the sector, or experimenting with new delivery models.
4. A sample programme for a councillor event is annex A as an illustration of activity.

Sport and physical activity improvement programmes

5. The LGA's sport and physical activity programmes are funded by Sport England via a lottery grant. These programmes provide leadership skills support to senior local authority officers and councillors. The programmes help attendees to develop skills, such as systems thinking, to lead their organisations to develop sustainable, place-based approaches with local communities to help tackle issues, such as health inequalities, cost of living financial pressures and climate change.
6. In 2022/23:
 - 6.1. 47 councils were supported through sport and physical programmes, including 56 officers supported through 3 themed officer alumni sessions
 - 6.2. 54 officers were supported through 3 senior officer leadership programmes
 - 6.3. 100 per cent of respondents said they felt more confident in performing their role after attending the programme.
7. The current LGA contract with Sport England (contract value £868,978) has been extended for several years, largely due to changes in programme format during COVID-19. The contract will end in February 2024.
8. The LGA has submitted a bid to Sport England to provide a 3 year programme of improvement support to councillors. This bid is designed to offer a range of support for both new portfolio holders and more experienced councillors. New programme content will be co-created with the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, to ensure the councillor voice runs throughout the programmes.
9. The LGA is in discussion with Sport England regarding future officer programmes, with a view to developing a proposal aligned to Sport England's strategy for local place-based leadership. An update will be provided to the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board when further information is available.

Scheduled programmes 2023-24

10. These programmes are funded from the current contract.

- 10.1. 1 November 2023 – Officer alumni session: Capturing value (online)
- 10.2. 1 December 2023 – Officer alumni session: Integrated Care Systems (online)
- 10.3. 6 – 8 December 2023 – Train the trainer: a programme to train new facilitators to support local leadership programmes
- 10.4. 8– 10 January 2024 – Officer leadership programme
- 10.5. February 2024 (date to be confirmed) – Councillor leadership programme

Cultural services improvement programmes

11. The LGA's cultural services improvement programmes are funded by Arts Council England via a lottery grant (contract value £165,699). These programmes provide leadership skills support to senior local authority officers and councillors and provide culture and library peer challenges to councils.

12. In 2022/23:

- 12.1. 45 councils were supported through programmes, including through eight culture and library peer challenges
- 12.2. 20 councillors were supported through 'Leadership Essentials' culture programme
- 12.3. 21 officers were supported through senior officer leadership programme (50 per cent of attendees were from Arts Council England priority places and levelling up for culture places)
- 12.4. 98 per cent of respondents rated the overall programme as excellent or good.

Officer programmes

13. In 2023/24, the LGA offers two officer improvement programmes:

- 13.1. 24 & 25 January 2024 - New and emerging senior library officers programme, supporting new post holders and officers on the career pathway to senior management roles.
- 13.2. (January to May 2024) Senior officer leadership programme - a six session online programme, for experienced lead officers for culture and library services. The programme features peer case studies and wider speakers (for example the University of Leeds). Each session features a topical theme. THE 2023 programme included: health and wellbeing, community engagement, collaborative working with councillors and climate change.

Councillor programmes

14. In 2023/24, the LGA offers two councillor improvement programmes

- 14.1. 15 & 16 November 2023 - Leadership Essentials: Culture. This year's programme was fully booked within 24 hours. The programme features presentations on a range of cross-cutting topics and includes speakers from DCMS, St. Helens Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council and Hackney Council. This programme will be co-hosted by Culture Tourism and Sport Board member, Cllr Darryl Smalley, City of York Councillor. Please see attached (Annex) the agenda for the Leadership Essentials: Culture programme.
- 14.2. 27 November 2023 - The value of culture for economic growth. This online session takes place in November and is fully booked. The session is aimed at economic growth portfolio holders and focuses on how culture can be an enabler for economic growth. The speakers include: Creative Industries, British Libraries Commercial and IP Centre and Luton Borough Council. This session will be co-hosted by Culture Tourism and Sport Board member, Cllr Michael Graham, Wakefield Councillor.

Culture and library peer challenges

15. In the 2023/24 programme, there are 14 peer challenge opportunities for councils. These are mainly online, but this year there are also a few opportunities for face to face peer challenges.

16. The peer challenges take place across two days and can cover a range of themes, including:

- Heritage initiatives
- Tackling health inequalities
- Community engagement
- Wellbeing
- Reducing loneliness and isolation
- Income generation
- Alternative delivery models
- Co-location
- Working with partners
- Climate change
- Contribution to wider strategic outcome

17. These peer challenges involve a peer team working to a focused brief that has been developed with the council. The process is designed to be supportive and transparent and to provide insights and good practice that can be included in the council's strategic activity. The peer team comprises an externally appointed peer challenge manager, officer peer, member peer and a representative from Arts Council England.

18. In the last year the LGA has delivered the following peer challenges:

- 18.1. London Borough of Camden Council – library

- 18.2. Bath and North East Somerset Council – culture
- 18.3. Wiltshire County Council – library
- 18.4. London Borough of Brent Council – culture
- 18.5. Luton Borough Council – library
- 18.6. Braintree District Council - culture

19. Scheduled and available peer challenges for 2023/24:

19.1. **Culture (3 peer challenge opportunities)**

19.1.1. Scheduled: 22-23 November, Telford and Wrekin Council, culture peer challenge (face to face)

19.1.2. Available: 2 online peer challenges

19.2. **Libraries (14 opportunities available)**

19.2.1. Successful applications from Salford City Council and Brighton and Hove Council (awaiting dates)

19.2.2. Available: 3 face to face peer challenges and 4 online peer challenges

Visitor economy training

20. The LGA is offering a pilot leadership development course on the visitor economy for officers. This is the first time this training has been offered and it is being funded from the CTS Board's policy budget. Almost 90 applications were received for the 20 places available, indicating there is strong demand for future training opportunities.

21. The course comprises three online webinars. Two have taken place with the final session on 23 November. Feedback so far has been positive, with delegates providing practical suggestions to improve future iterations, some of which have already been built into sessions.

22. Although originally open to English councils only, as the WLGA provides improvement support to Welsh councils, there was strong interest in attending from Welsh officers. A place was subsequently made available to Welsh authorities to reflect this.

23. There is no obvious external funder for this work, so consideration will need to be given at the Board's budget process in March as to whether further training is commissioned.

Implications for Wales

24. Most of this work is England only, as the funders are responsible only for English councils, and the WLGA provides improvement support to Welsh councils. However, one place for a Welsh authority was established for the visitor economy training.

Financial Implications

25. All work is being delivered within planned budgets. Negotiations are underway for future contracts with the Government funders.

Equalities implications

26. Each course selects speakers and case studies with diversity in mind. Delegates are given the opportunity in advance of all sessions to communicate any adaptations that would maximise their learning experience.

Next steps

27. Please can the Culture Tourism and Sport Board:

27.1. Be advocates for the programmes and help us to promote the programmes across wider LGA and council boards, to all councils and within their own organisations.

27.2. Cultural services programmes are under-represented in the North of England, particularly in the North East and North West, and we would value board members' help to advocate in these areas (alongside the work we are doing with regional teams and networks).

27.3. Express an interest to the political group offices to be a member peer for future culture or library peer challenges. There are only a small number of member peers with culture or library experience, which can limit peer team availability for peer challenges.

Leadership Essentials: Culture Services**Date:** Wednesday 15 November – Thursday 16 November 2023**Venue:** [Radcliffe House, Warwick Conferences, Warwick University, Coventry CV2 7SH](#)**Facilitator:** Heidi Bellamy, LGA Associate**Co-host:** [Cllr Darryl Smalley](#), LGA Culture Tourism and Sport Board member (and City of York councillor (LibDem))**AGENDA****Wednesday 15 November 2023**

Time	Session
7pm	Dinner, including after-dinner speaker Speaker: Cllr Darryl Smalley, LGA Culture Tourism and Sport Board member (and City of York councillor (LibDem))

Accommodation provided for overnight stay and breakfast.

Thursday 16 November 2023

Time	Session
8.45am	Arrival and networking with coffee for a prompt event start of 9am
9am	Welcome and housekeeping
9.05am	Introductions
9.25am	The current context: an update from the LGA Lauren Lucas, Adviser, LGA
9.50am	An update from Arts Council England Laura Dyer MBE, Deputy Chief Executive
10.15am	Table discussions
10.35am	Bath and North East Somerset Council: Variable pricing at Bath and North East Somerset cultural venues Speaker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Paul Roper, Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development (LibDem) • Rob Campbell, Head of Heritage Services
11.05am	Break
11.20am	St Helens Council: Using culture and library services to raise awareness of cross-cutting themes Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Anthony Burns, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage (Labour)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cath Shea, Arts Development Manager
11.50am	<p>Hackney Council: Co-creating cultural places with Hackney's local communities</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Chris Kennedy, Cabinet member for health, adult social care, voluntary sector and culture (Labour) • Petra Roberts, Strategic Service Head for Culture, Libraries and Heritage Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development
12.20pm	Panel discussion
12.40pm	Lunch – please be back for a prompt 1.30pm start
1.30pm	<p>The Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport: The Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital Framework</p> <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harman Sagger, Head Economist for Arts, Heritage and Tourism
2pm	<p>Arts Council England: Cultural compacts</p> <p>Paul Bristow, Director for Strategic Partnerships</p>
2.30pm	Table discussions
2.55pm	Summary
3pm	Close