

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – Report from Cllr Liz Green (Chair)

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board visit to Plymouth

1. The LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board held their final meeting of 2022/23 in Plymouth, where they were hosted by Board member Cllr Jemima Laing and Leader of Plymouth Council, Cllr Tudor Evans.
2. The Board agenda included a presentation from Tracey Crouch MP, updating the Board on progress following the publication of her Fan-led Review of Football Governance. It also included presentations from Lindsey Hall, Chair of Plymouth Culture and James Mackenzie-Blackman, CEO of Plymouth's Theatre Royal.
3. Following the formal meeting, the Board had the opportunity to visit some of Plymouth's rich cultural sites including tours of:
 - 3.1 **The Market Hall:** Based in one of Plymouth's most historic neighbourhoods, [Market Hall](#) was formerly the market for the whole of Devonport. Full of original features, the building has been given a £7.6 million upgrade, creating the first 'immersive video dome' of its kind in Europe alongside a creative and collaborative workspace for digital businesses and a social hub for people of all ages.
 - 3.2 **The TR2 Production and Learning Centre:** A sister site to the Theatre Royal, Plymouth, TR2 features rehearsal studios and workshops for the production of set and costumes. It is set on the bank of the River Plym and was designed by [Ian Ritchie Architects](#). It contains set, costume, prop-making and rehearsal facilities. TR2 provides one of the biggest education and outreach programmes for a regional venue in the UK.
 - 3.3 **The Box:** [The Box](#) is a museum, gallery and archive, which opened in 2020, following major investment and refurbishment by Plymouth Council. It houses a collection of about 2 million items. The core of the building was previously Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery which closed in 2016. The building was created in 1907–1910 and was combined with the former Central Library building and St Luke's Church on Tavistock Place into The Box.
4. The new Board for 23/24 met on 13 September and agreed a work programme and lobbying lines for the year, which includes calling for a Royal Commission on

the future of public leisure and culture facilities. During this year, we will work closely with other boards across the LGA to deliver a joined-up programme of support and lobbying work for and on behalf of our communities. Key areas of focus include:

- 4.1 Supporting better use of evidence across the sector, and coordinating national partners investing in data collection
- 4.2 Helping councils to become intelligent commissioners of projects to improve sustainability and reduce energy usage in culture and sport venues
- 4.3 Setting the agenda on devolution of culture and thinking about practical ways to deliver place-based investment
- 4.4 Advocating for investment tools and place-based management tools to manage the visitor economy, including a tourism levy and regulation of short-term lets.

The Government's Creative Industries Sector Vision

5. The LGA has welcomed the Government's new Creative Industries Sector Vision, developed in partnership with the Creative Industries Council. It sets out how the government and industry will work together to unlock the growth potential of the creative industries to 2030 and beyond.
6. The Culture, Tourism and Sport Board is represented by Cllr Phil Seeva, and Cllr Peter Golds from September 2023, on the Regions and Clusters group of the Creative Industries Council, where they advocate on behalf of councils and promotes evidence of their contribution to the creative economy. This Group is being reformed but local government representation on replacement bodies is confirmed.
7. The Vision commits to strengthening the Government's collaboration with the Local Government Association, local authorities and leaders to support them in the development of local creative industries strategies.
8. The accompanying press release also outlines a series of new funding commitments from government. This includes further investment in the Creative Industries Clusters programme, which was a key recommendation of the LGA's Commission on Culture and Local Government.

LGA Culture Commission

9. The LGA continues the Board's work on the Culture Commission with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA), Arts Council England and other partners.

10. In the first half of 2023, the team took the findings and recommendations out around the country, running a series of regional roundtables and presenting the report at key sector events, including: a high-level cultural roundtable in the north-east; a conference on cultural education in the north-west; a cultural summit in Birmingham; Libraries Connected's annual conference; Arts Council England's Cultural Compacts conference; the Museum Organisations sector group; and the What Next meeting.
11. We are now establishing a Local Government Cultural Action Partnership with CLOA to collaborate on securing the delivery of the Commission's recommendations and advocate for the role of local publicly funded culture and a local, regional and national level.

LGA/Arts Council England Councillor Sounding Board for Libraries

12. The LGA and Arts Council England work together on the bi-annual Councillor Sounding Board for Libraries. This is co-chaired by Cllr Julie Jones-Evans in her role as the LGA's Libraries Champion, alongside Arts Council England Library Director Luke Burton.
13. The latest meeting took place on the 27th September and provided an opportunity for members of the group to discuss resilience in the library sector and receive updates on projects including: library data; Green Libraries; Baroness Sanderson's Library Strategy; and the Library On programme to improve the digital visibility of library websites.

Swimming Pool Support Fund

14. Members and officers have continued to work with DCMS and Sport England on the design and launch of the [£63 million swimming pool support fund](#), which will now also be matched by a further £20 million capital funding from Sport England's own funds. The £20 million revenue element of the fund was announced in September with 103 councils successful in their bids. This equates to just under 50 per cent of the applicants who applied for funding and will impact 23.5 million swimmers who currently use those facilities. The capital element of the Fund is open for bidding, and is expected to be equally over-subscribed.

Government Sport Strategy

15. Government has launched their new 'Get Active' sport strategy, aiming to boost

activity levels by reaching those who are currently least active. The strategy recognises the LGA's leadership programmes for councillors and officers, and commits to develop a new national vision for facilities. The strategy also launched a new National Physical Activity Taskforce, which met in No 10 Downing Street on 27 September, and was attended by Cllr Liz Green.

Visitor economy leadership training

16. The Board has developed some leadership training to support officers working on the visitor economy, complementing the work already provided on culture and sport. The visitor economy has emerged as a growth area for many councils, a number of whom are developing visitor strategies for the first time. Almost 90 applications were received for the 20 places available. Cllr Liz Green is facilitating the three sessions.

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