

# Minutes of last Culture, Tourism & Sport Board meeting

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## Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

Wednesday, 17 January 2024

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Item	Decisions and actions
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#### 1 Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed Members, officers and guests to the meeting.

Apologies were received by Cllr Dixon, Cllr Henry and Cllr White. Cllr Hopgood attended the meeting as a substitute.

Cllr Jeffels attending the meeting as an observer.

No declaration of interest were received.

#### 2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record, subject to a minor amendment to Cllr Shipp's authority.

#### 3 Lucy Frazer KC MP, Secretary of State for DCMS

The Chair welcomed **Lucy Frazer MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport**, to the meeting.

The Chair, alongside Cllrs Julie Jones-Evans, Joanne Laban and Michael Graham presented a series of slides to the Secretary of State, which set out information related to Council culture and leisure services. Specifically focusing on:

- Roles and responsibilities (facts and figures)
- Investments and results
- Annual spend on culture, heritage and sport in England
- Locally led successful programmes and case studies
- Local government's offer and asks to government

The Secretary of State responded to the presentation slides setting out the following points:

- The importance of working in partnership cross-party to ensure that constituent's need continued to be met was emphasised.
- Ensuring that positive outcomes and examples could be demonstrated when bidding for more money was key to securing additional funds.
- DCMS continued to ensure the success of Creative Industries (CI) through adequate funding.
- The importance of ensuring that young people had the opportunity to develop their passions outside of school was emphasised.
- DCMS were creating new local youth partnerships alongside youth investment funds to help support local authorities and their residents.
- The role of local authorities and the funding allocated to expand the availability of wraparound care in areas from September 2024 was explained.
- The importance of local skills improvement plans was emphasised.
- As part of the devolution agenda, DCMS were working to shape a new culture offer in highly devolved areas.
- In recent meetings with Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Boards, local organisations were looking at how to expand tourism in their areas, in which local authorities play a critical role.

The Chair, alongside Cllrs Julie Jones-Evans, Joanne Laban and Michael Graham asked the Secretary of State a number of questions:

1. The Swimming Pool Support Fund has made a real difference to local areas, saving core facilities. However, [UKActive's recent survey](#) showed that 40 per cent of council areas remain at risk of reducing services or closing facilities by March of this year. 87.5 per cent have had to raise prices to cover costs, but reducing access to those on lower incomes. **What can we do to help build the business case for further investment, and integration with health services, to make this sector sustainable again?**  
(Cllr Laban)

In response to Cllr Laban's question, the Secretary of State emphasised the importance of The Swimming Pool Support Fund and the positive impact it had had on local communities. She added that the provision of data was crucial to securing additional funding.

2. Continuing the point about building business cases, there is a real need to improve the data and evidence available on the sector at both the local and national level. The Board had a very positive presentation about the developing [DCMS Arts and Heritage Capital Framework](#), and the [Moving Communities Platform](#) developed by Sport England has also been invaluable. However, there is still a significant gap on data available for many cultural services, and particularly in academic research interpreting the impact of the data. **Is there more we could do together to merge local insight and national policy into a robust evidence base of impact?**  
(Cllr Graham)

In response to Cllr Graham's question, the Secretary of State confirmed

that data was monitored regularly within DCMS to better understand delivery outcomes and potential data gaps. She emphasised the importance of working closely with local authorities in relation to data gathering to ensure joined-up working and minimal data gaps.

3. CIs are one of our fastest growing sectors and Government initiatives like the new strategy and the Creative Industries Council are positive, but **could we make more use of council services to develop a skills pipeline for this sector, particularly for young people?** Our Culture Commission found that council cultural service often acted as an incubator for people developing their practice and moving between public and private sector.  
*(Cllr Jones-Evans)*

In response to Cllr Jones-Evans' question, the Secretary of State highlighted the positive effect that Creative Industries had on people in relation to skills, such as building confidence, public speaking and making new friends. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that creative programmes and classes were available for young people in schools as a starting point.

4. The visitor economy is starting to recover, particularly with American visitors, which is very positive. However, the pressures on council finances are starting to hinder councils' ability to curate places as destinations. The visitor sector itself is very keen to see a reduction in VAT to remain competitive, but that still leaves an issue about getting investment into the destination as a place, rather than into an individual business. **Can we undertake some formal testing of the possibility of local levies**, with the money ringfenced for the visitor economy, as are in widespread international use; and in place in the UK for other service areas such as the late-night levy for hospitality.  
*(Cllr Green, Chair)*

In response to Cllr Green's question, the Secretary of State stated that a number of local areas had introduced their own local levies using existing schemes. The importance of LVEPs in joining Boards together to share best practice in relation to bringing tourism into their localities was emphasised.

Members and guests asked the Secretary of State a number of questions which focused on the following points:

- Returning a proportion of savings generated for other public services to councils
- The increase in the number of short-term lets and the effect on residents.
- The importance of early engagement.
- The importance of local authorities being able to plan for the longer term.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Secretary of State for attending the meeting and echoed comments related to joint working arrangements between DCMS and local authorities.

The Chair invited the Secretary of State to attend the annual CTS Conference scheduled to take place on 5 March 2024.

**Decision:**

- Members noted the report and the update from the Secretary of State.

#### **4 Trends in funding announcements for culture, tourism and sport**

The Chair invited **Ian Leete, Senior Adviser**, to introduce the report. The report summarised available information about planned council funding for culture, tourism and sport in 2024.

Members made the following contributions:

- The significance of planning for the longer term, particularly in relation to refreshing leisure centres, was emphasised.
- A question was asked which related to section 34.1 of the report and the five-year guarantee for councils who had received a s114 report.
- The importance of focusing on plans for the future of arts and culture within districts was recognised.
- Reference was made to ever-increasing pressures, such as in-year budget pressures and inflationary pressures, mostly driven by social care and children services.
- The importance of organisations being able to continue to secure match funding and investment was emphasised.
- A concern was raised which related to pressures on Arts Council funding and Sport England funding.
- The importance of advocacy was emphasised.
- The need to focus on which authorities desperately need additional funding and which authorities can deliver, was expressed.

Ian responded to Members' comments and confirmed that feedback would be included in future conversations with organisations and civil servants.

**Decision:**

- Members noted the report.

#### **5 Care leavers paper**

The Chair invited **Louise Smith, Senior Adviser (Children and Young People)**, to introduce the report. The Chair of the LGA, Cllr Shaun Davies, had announced that one of his priorities for 2023-24 is corporate parenting, in particular support for care leavers. Recognising that all Councillors are corporate parents to children in care and care leavers, all policy Boards were asked to share their own ideas for this priority area, to shape the LGA's work in relation to supporting care leavers. The report outlined current ideas for the programme and next steps.

Members made the following contributions:

- The importance of listening to young people and working to deliver aspects which were important to them, was emphasised.
- Positive examples of good practice were shared.
- The importance of wrap-around support for care leavers was recognised.
- A question was asked which related to additional work that local authorities could do to further increase the uptake in culture and arts activities and events.
- Reference was made to section 6 within the report and the importance of joined up working and the sharing of best practice was emphasised.

Louise responded to Members' comments and thanked them for their contributions.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

## **6 Workplan update**

The Chair invited **Ian Leete, Senior Adviser**, to introduce the report which updated Board Members on progress against the workplan, and on any major pieces of work since the last meeting.

A question was asked which related to the date of the upcoming UK Music webinar on music venues and the visitor economy. Officers confirmed that the webinar would now take place on 26 February.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to send more information Members related to the upcoming UK Music webinar, including the joining link.

## **7 Outside Bodies**

The Chair invited **Ian Leete, Senior Adviser**, to introduce the report which updated Board Members on progress against the workplan, and on any major pieces of work since the last meeting.

A question was asked which related to the date of the upcoming UK Music webinar on music venues and the visitor economy. Officers confirmed that the webinar would now take place on 26 February.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to send more information Members related to the upcoming UK Music webinar, including the joining link.

**8 Any other business**

None.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Julie Jones-Evans	Isle of Wight Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Joanne Laban	Enfield Council
Members	Cllr Michael Graham Cllr Elly Cutkelvin Cllr Jemima Laing Cllr Adam Hug Cllr Peter Golds CBE Cllr Barry Lewis Cllr Linda Robinson Cllr Neil Jory Cllr Gary Ridley Cllr Darryl Smalley Cllr Ian Shipp	Wakefield City Council Leicester City Council Plymouth City Council Westminster City Council Tower Hamlets Council Derbyshire County Council Wychavon District Council West Devon Borough Council Coventry City Council City of York Council West Sussex Council
Apologies	Cllr Tracey Dixon Cllr Jane Ashworth OBE Cllr Richard Henry Cllr Chris White	South Tyneside Council Stoke on Trent City Council Stevenage Borough Council City and District of St Albans
In Attendance	Cllr Adele Barnett-Ward Cllr Jonathan Simpson MBE Cllr Henry Higgins Cllr Steve Allen Cllr Amanda Hopgood Cllr David Jeffels	Reading Council Camden London Borough Council Hillingdon London Borough Peterborough City Council Durham County Council North Yorkshire Council