

## **Culture, Tourism and Sport Board Annual Review 2014-15**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

This report sets out the Annual Review of activities of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board for 2014-15.

### **Recommendation:**

Members are asked to note the annual review of activities.

### **Action:**

Officers to take forward as directed by members.

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## **Culture, Tourism and Sport Board Annual Review 2014-15**

### **Overview and headline achievements**

1. From William Sieghart's independent review of public libraries to the future of English Heritage and the Triennial Review of VisitEngland and VisitBritain, the Board has shaped the national political agenda and made decisive interventions on priority issues for councils. We have continued to offer practical support to councillors, assisting over 150 portfolio holders to lead transformational change through leadership seminars and other events.
2. Given continued budget pressures, the Board has also raised the national profile about how culture, tourism and sport can drive economic growth, help to prevent costly pressures such as poor health and inactivity, and benefit from greater devolution. As such, the Board has contributed towards the achievement of LGA corporate priorities and campaigns, and has worked very closely with the LGA Executive and other Boards on shared policy interests.

### **Magna Carta, the Visitor Economy and Heritage**

3. The Board has continued to lead on supporting wide local government involvement with the Magna Carta 800 anniversary, which is an important opportunity to promote democratic renewal and attract visitors. The Barons' challenge to an over-mighty King 800 years ago also resonates with the LGA's own campaign to reverse years of centralising top-down government by devolving powers and funding to a constitutionally independent and rejuvenated local government.
4. The Board has represented councils' interests to the national committee, Ministers and VisitEngland, and supported them to develop plans by sharing the latest practical information. Lord Bew, Co-Chair of the Speaker's Advisory Group on the 2015 Anniversaries, hosted the Board at Portcullis House in December 2014, and the LGA Chair met Sir Robert Worcester, Chair of the Magna Carta 800 Committee, in November.
5. The visitor economy is one of this country's strongest performing economic sectors and we have kept a high national profile on councils' leadership role. We used our written and oral evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee to argue that future growth from tourism will be unlocked by supporting industry to improve the quality of its offer so that visitors stay longer and spend more in destinations. We also set out how the visitor economy stands to benefit from the LGA's devolution campaign. The Board successfully made the case for a refocused and stronger VisitEngland to support local destinations as part of the Triennial Review of VisitEngland and VisitBritain.
6. In April 2015, English Heritage split into two organisations – an independent charity to care for the 420 properties in the national collection that will become self-funding (English Heritage) and a non-departmental body with responsibility for discharging the government's statutory planning and regulatory functions in the historic environment (Historic England). The LGA helped to shape the new arrangements through its involvement in the consultation and Historic England's first corporate plan. The Board emphasised that local government will want to maintain a relationship with both bodies, and that there was an opportunity to build upon existing partnerships and embed the positive use of planning to boost growth through heritage assets. The Board also

highlighted the challenge of English Heritage becoming self-financing and the absolute importance of the properties remaining in public ownership.

7. The Board has continued to support councils to involve communities in other historic anniversaries. In particular, the online First World War resource, which signposts councils to funding sources and sharing case studies, continues to be one of the most popular LGA web pages. We have also met the Local Government Women's Society to discuss how we can work together to promote and encourage involvement in the 2017 suffragettes' anniversary.

### **Libraries and culture**

8. The Board was very engaged with William Sieghart's Independent Review of Public Libraries, which was commissioned by DCMS and CLG Ministers. Through meetings with Mr. Sieghart and oral evidence to his Panel, the Board secured recommendations that recognised the local accountability of public libraries, emphasised the importance of supporting libraries to be as relevant as possible to as many people as possible, and built on existing locally-led good practice.
9. Mr. Sieghart also recommended setting up a local government-led Task Force, jointly accountable to LGA elected Members and Ministers, to take forward the recommendations. The Task Force met in March and May and its early achievements included securing £7.4 million to fund the rollout of Wi-Fi to all public libraries in England. The Board continues to work closely with, and receive regular progress reports, from the Task Force Chair, Paul Blantern, Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council.
10. On culture more generally, the Board has continued to represent local government's interests in high profile national programmes and debates, including the Cultural Commissioning Programme and the Warwick Commission into Cultural Value. Our relationship with Arts Council England goes from strength to strength and we reinforced our shared commitment to supporting effective local political leadership, seeking out and sharing the latest innovation and making a compelling case about how culture can help councils to achieve wider community outcomes.

### **Sport and Physical Activity**

11. The LGA's campaign for greater Premier League investment in grassroots football attracted significant media coverage and ensured that local government had a strong voice in this high profile issue. In response to lobbying, the Premier League pledged an extra £1 billion for the grassroots game.
12. The Board quickly forged a positive relationship with the new Chair of Sport England, reaffirming shared priorities, including our joint Sport Leadership Essentials Programme, supporting links with health and securing greater recognition that investing in sport can save money upstream by preventing costly ill health.

### **Improvement**

13. We have supported over 150 portfolio holders to lead transformational change through leadership seminars and peer support covering sport and physical activity, culture, libraries and heritage. Given continued austerity, our events are valued opportunities to share learning about

new delivery models and more efficient ways of working. The Board's improvement programme is funded by, and delivered in partnership with, Arts Council England and Sport England.

### **2015 Culture, Tourism and Sport Annual Conference and Relationships**

14. Over 150 councillors and senior officers attended this year's annual conference in Durham, confirming its status as the definitive event for the councillors and senior officers leading culture, tourism and sport. The Chairs of Arts Council England, VisitEngland, Historic England and Sport England participated in a lively debate on devolution. Other high profile speakers included Rosie Millard, journalist and Chair of Hull UK Capital of Culture 2017, Roly Keating, Chief Executive the British Library and Steve Cram CBE, Chancellor of Sunderland University and former athlete.
15. The Board Chair met the Culture Minister to agree priorities for the Libraries Task Force and has maintained very positive relationships with the DCMS agencies through meetings with the Chairs of Arts Council England, VisitEngland, Historic England and Sport England.

### **Next Year**

16. The new Government will need to work closely with councils to achieve its manifesto commitments for culture, tourism and sport. A number of CTS Board priorities are reflected in the manifesto, including supporting libraries, investing in grassroots football, school sport, promoting tourism, building on the Olympic and Paralympic legacy, and growing the creative industries. We have requested a meeting with the new Secretary of State, new Sport and Tourism Minister and to re-affirm our relationship with the Culture Minister.
17. The Board will work to ensure that national policy reinforces and supports the locally-led nature of much of this agenda and LGA priorities. The Board will take this forward in partnership with the LGA Chair, Leadership Board, and other relevant policy boards.
18. Given the continued very challenging fiscal climate, and the wider reform agenda, the Board will continue to support culture, tourism and sport portfolio holders to implement new delivery models, work more efficiently and be ready to shape and benefit from devolution and further change in health and social care.