

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – report from Cllr Ian Stephens (Chair)

Sport and Physical Activity

1. The LGA has responded to the Government's consultation on a new sports strategy. Our response highlighted that councils and their local partners are well placed to lead a step-change in sport participation rates that will improve the nation's physical and mental wellbeing. They have the assets, the insight and the strong track record to boost participation, especially when it comes to reaching people who play sport informally or who want to start playing sport. Given this and the financial constraints facing discretionary services, we are calling for Government and Sport England to re-balance funding away from national bodies and towards locally-led approaches.
2. Our response builds upon my recent conversations with Tracey Crouch MP, Sports Minister, and the LGA's high profile media campaign for more investment in grassroots football, which recently helped to persuade the Premier League to double the reach of its school sport programme to 10,000 schools in the next three years. Re-balancing national sports funding will help ensure that this investment is maximised by giving councils and local partners the flexibility to offer opportunities that keep young people playing sport after they have left school.
3. With rugby fever sweeping the country, a double page spread in [First](#) magazine highlighted how councils are helping to inspire sport and boost tourism. Of the 11 host cities, there are 13 local authority areas including three London Boroughs. Rugby World Cup organisers believe the tournament could generate up to £1 billion for the economy.

Libraries

4. I was delighted to speak at the latest LGA / Arts Council England libraries seminar on 15 September at The British Library (BL). Over 20 portfolio holders from across the country shared how they are leading transformational change of libraries. Roly Keating, Chief Executive of The BL, hosted the event and shared exciting plans to extend the BL's network of Business and IP Centres to another 20 places by 2020, and to develop a wider Living Knowledge network that will further strengthen partnerships with libraries across the country. Case studies included The Hive in Worcester, the first joint public / university library in Europe.

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5. The Board agreed a work programme for the coming year that will make a significant contribution to corporate LGA campaigns and make a difference to our member councils. Priorities include supporting over 140 councillors through our very popular culture and sport improvement programme, developing analysis and support on the visitor economy and devolution, influencing the Culture White Paper, and delivering another successful annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference in Leicester 24 – 25 February.
6. Members also considered a progress update from the LGA / Department for Culture, Media and Sport Leadership for Libraries Taskforce. They congratulated the Taskforce

on its early achievements, in particular securing £7.1 million to rollout WiFi to English Libraries. I am speaking to the Culture Minister on 15 October to discuss future priorities for the Taskforce.

Historic Anniversaries

7. The Women's Local Government Society, in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council and the LGA, has launched a national project to involve communities and councils to mark the centenary of women's suffrage in 2018. The idea is to find and pay tribute to 100 pioneers who fought for universal suffrage and then participated in public life. Women were able to vote in council elections from the late 19th century but it was not until 1918 that some women were allowed to vote for the first time in parliamentary elections.

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