

A Passion
for Excellence
One year on



A Passion for Excellence One year on

The strategy *A Passion for Excellence*, launched in March 2008, is about supporting local government and their partners deliver better outcomes. It set out a framework for the culture and sport sectors to:

- improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of culture and sport in the delivery of economic, social and environmental outcomes in local communities
- improve the performance of the culture and sport sector and to address under- performance
- build capacity and leadership
- simplify and coordinate the regional improvement infrastructure.

One year on, this document sets out what progress has been made and outlines further work to be undertaken.



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Foreword

A year ago we launched *A Passion for Excellence*. Since then the economic climate in which we all operate has toughened, but that should in no way lessen our commitment to improving cultural and sporting services.

The right response is to see improving provision of culture and sport as an even higher priority – to work harder to offer greater value for money and higher quality services for local residents, and to build up existing provision with a view to the increasing contribution that culture and creativity will make to the local, regional and national economies that emerge over the next few years.

We are encouraged by the proportion of local authorities that have adopted improvement targets directly or indirectly dependent on the contribution made by culture and sport, and how national and local government are working together to provide free swimming – from April 2009 eighty two per cent of local authorities in England will be offering free swimming to people over 60, under 16, or both.

Good progress has been achieved since *A Passion for Excellence* was published in March 2008. Confidence is growing in the benefits of self-assessment, peer review and leadership training, and the networks and partnerships essential to improvement are growing and strengthening.

This Action Plan can help build on this progress, providing a reference point for the key initiatives, resources and contacts essential to further continuous improvement.

We urge you to make full use of it to ensure that your councils are adding the maximum possible value and quality to the services you provide.



Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
Secretary of State for
Culture, Media and Sport

Andy Burnham



Cllr Chris White
Chair, LGA Culture,
Tourism and Sport Board

Chris White

01

Where we are

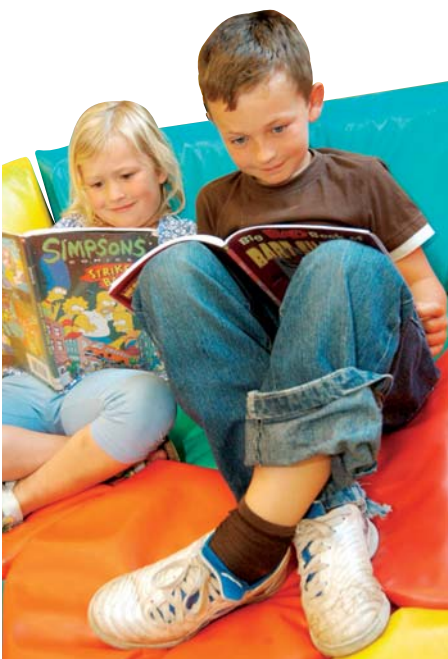
Since launching the strategy, a number of changes have been made to the improvement and efficiency architecture in an effort to simplify arrangements.

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) have now been set up in each region. These partnerships are at the heart of a more devolved approach to supporting councils and partnerships achieve better outcomes for the residents and better value for money. RIEPs' key ambitions for a region are articulated in each individual Regional Improvement and Efficiency Strategy. These set out core improvement objectives for RIEPs to support local councils and help partners achieve their strategic vision. To find out more about RIEPs please go to www.lga.gov.uk

New regional arrangements for NDPBs, outside of London, have been announced. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) carried out a review of its regional arrangements with the ambition to improve impact, collaboration and influence at a local level. As a result each region has set up arrangements where key NDPBs can jointly deliver a core set of shared priorities across the culture and sport agenda. These priorities are: Regional Strategies; Local Area Agreements; Local Government commitment to culture and sport; Place Shaping; and LOCOG liaison on 2012 and the Cultural Olympiad. To find out more about the new arrangements please go to www.culture.gov.uk

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) were agreed in all 150 upper-tier local authority areas in England in June 2008. The number of Local Authorities will increase in 2009 as a result of local government restructuring. LAAs set out the priorities for a local area and are the only place where central government will agree targets with local authorities and their partners on outcomes delivered by local government on its own or in partnership with others. Each LAA has no more than 35 negotiated targets (alongside 16 statutory education and early years' targets, six of which will no longer have statutory targets set from 2010). There will be a single, annual performance review to examine the findings of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and respond to changing priorities in the area. To find out more about the LAAs please go to www.communities.gov.uk

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will be introduced in April 2009 and will provide an independent assessment of how well local services are working together to improve the quality of life for local people. Each CAA will consider prospects for sustainable improvement, assessing and reporting how well public money is spent, and will ensure that local public bodies are accountable for their quality and impact. The final CAA framework was published in February 2009 and the first reporting will take place in November 2009. To find out more about the CAA please go to www.audit-commission.gov.uk



02

What we are doing

Since launching *A Passion for Excellence*, DCMS and its partners have undertaken a programme of work to help the culture and sport sector:

- improve their quality, effectiveness and efficiency in delivering local outcomes
- improve their quality and application of self-improvement
- increase their capacity to support self-improvement.

Over the past year all the partners have been developing an integrated offer to councils to support their improvement. The core of this offer is set out below and more details will be available on the IDeA Knowledge website: www.idea.gov.uk/cultureandsport

Supporting LAA delivery and the National Indicator Set

We have recently completed an analysis of the councils that were involved in delivering 'stretch targets' for sport participation in early LAAs. This will enable us to identify what helped them to be successful and transfer learning to all councils now delivering challenging improvement targets.

Culture and sport are making major contributions in terms of improvement targets (within LAAs) and to wider outcomes. At June 2008, over 90% of the LAAs included improvement targets which were directly or in directly dependent on the contribution made by culture and sport. As the following table shows, many councils prioritised culture and sport in their LAA.



Indicator	LAAs with Improvement Targets	LAAs with Local Indicators
NI8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation	80 (53%)	15(10%)
NI9 Use of libraries	10 (7%)	7 (5%)
NI10 Visit to museums and galleries	2 (1%)	3 (2%)
NI11 Engagement in the arts	24 (16%)	14 (9%)
NI6 Participation in volunteering	43 (29%)	19 (13%)
NI57 Children's and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport	26 (17%)	11 (7%)
NI110 Young people's participation in positive activities	77 (51%)	8 (5%)
Total	262	77

In December 2008 national data on local rates of participation in the arts, libraries and museums were published for the first time, adding to the data that is already available for sport. The sector now has a national, regional and local baseline against which it can track its progress in terms of increasing participation levels. For the arts, libraries and museums, the local baseline data is based on interviews conducted between April 2008 and October 2008 in Sport England's Active People Survey. Interim progress will be published in December 2009, using data collected between October 2008 and October 2009. Final progress will be assessed in December 2010, using data collected between October 2009 and October 2010. For the sport and active recreation indicator, the baseline data came from the 2005/6 Active People Survey based on a 1,000 sample size. The ongoing Active People Survey began in October 2007, with a contract in place until October 2010. There is an aspiration to continue the survey beyond that date subject to funding availability.

For more information on local rates of participation from these national indicators please go to www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/research_and_statistics/5607.aspx and for the sport and active recreation data www.sportengland.org/national_indicator_8_la_cc-2.xls.



Arts Council England is committed to supporting Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) who have made engagement in the arts a priority. This support will help these LSPs increase the percentage of the adult population that have either participated in or attended an arts activity at least three times over the past 12 months.

In addition to a range of different regional support programmes, the Arts Council is running a national programme through three key work strands:

1. translating national data and intelligence and making it useful on a local level
2. acting as a bridge between LAA campaigns and other regional and national initiatives to increase engagement
3. capturing and disseminating emerging good practice.

To find out more about the programme join the Community of Practice please go to www.communities.idea.gov.uk/c/733890/home.do



The Arts Council has also provided additional support to the Network of Arts Audience Development Agencies to ensure sharing of good practice around England. To find out about your local agency visit www.audiencedevelopment.org

The London Cultural Improvement Group



The London Cultural Improvement Group was established following extensive consultation with Local Authorities and partner agencies. It developed the London Cultural Improvement Programme to improve London's Local Authority Cultural Services and build capacity in the sector to promote continuous improvement. The programme is supported by Capital Ambition, Cultural Agencies (MLA London, the Arts Council, Sport England), and other partners; and contains a number of ambitious projects. Some key achievements include:

- a thriving Cultural Improvement Group established and attended by over 50 representatives from Local Authorities and agencies
- effective collaboration between a number of organisations such as London Libraries Development Agency, Association of London Chief Librarians, London Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association and London Parks Forum
- the securing of partner funding to match Capital Ambition's £200k investment in the London Cultural Improvement Programme and ensured collaboration from a range of agencies in its delivery
- the organisation of events focusing on culture in Local Area Agreements
- a published performance book for London's cultural services
- a cultural improvement website (hosted by London Councils): www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/networks/lcip/group.htm
- the majority of London Boroughs are now participating in the self-improvement programme, with over 50 peers trained to date
- two-thirds of London's Local Authority museums are progressing through an improvement programme and preparing to bid into an improvement pot provided by the London Museum's Hub
- a feasibility study for a transformational programme to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of public library service provision in London.

"The improvement programme will make a real difference to Local Authority Cultural Services both on an individual borough basis and at a regional level. I thoroughly recommend the process to any organisation wanting to improve in a structured way."

Toni Ainge Chair of the London Chief Leisure Officers Association

"The aim of the improvement programme is to work together to drive improvement in the cultural sector across London and ensure that we all make the most of the enviable offer we have on our front doors."

Moira Sinclair Chief Executive of ACE London and Chair of the London Cultural Improvement Board

The Culture Improvement Partnership East Midlands



The Culture Improvement Partnership East Midlands is jointly funded by the Regional NDPBs and the RIEP. It is now in its second year of activity. It operates on a regional and sub-regional basis using part-time secondments from councils, thereby building the sector's capacity for self-improvement.

The Cultural Improvement Partnership East Midlands has developed its own website offering guidance and advice to councils (www.cipem.org.uk/pastevents.html) and has put on events covering a range of topics including: *A Passion for Excellence*; strategic commissioning; positioning culture and sport in LAAs; showcasing excellence in building sustainable communities and inspiring excellence. The LAA has been a particular focus, with a number of publications designed to enhance and develop the sector's positioning.

Highlights include:

- development and delivery of a pilot member support programme to each sub-county area
- supporting the development of a comprehensive network of culture and sport officers' groups
- showcasing the impact of LAA stretch targets in Derbyshire
- a successful bid to CLG across the three upper-tier authorities (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) to transfer learning via peers
- cultural Panels being created to meet three times a year to position and inform their respective Local Strategic Partnerships
- developing a new Culture Member forum in Northamptonshire
- developing a new 'common and important cultural indicators' library in Nottinghamshire.

The East Midlands has actively promoted self-assessment and 42% of all TAES validations have been in the region. Northamptonshire has also successfully used a unique cross-county and district approach to self-assessment and improvement planning, both to build self-improvement networks and support an under-performing council.

"The journey through TAES was both rewarding and enlightening as it brought together all levels of staff within Culture and Leisure Services and created a determined focus of where we were, and where we needed to get to in order to raise the standard and profile of our organisation."

Ian R Redfern, Head of Culture and Leisure Services at
Northampton Borough Council



Improvement networks

Culture and sport improvement networks have now established or are forming in London, East Midlands, the South West, South East, East of England, West Midlands, North West and Yorkshire & Humber. They will support the greater focus on 'sector-led improvement' driven by local authorities. Many have already developed relationships with their RIEPs and received funding from them for improvement work or capacity building.

Maintaining a strategic dialogue between councils and regional agencies

The concept of culture and sport strategic reviews was proposed in the improvement strategy as a framework to assist councils and the key culture and sport NDPBs to engage in a constructive, managed and strategic dialogue to facilitate the ongoing improvement of culture and sport services in local communities.

This dialogue will encourage a collective approach to culture and sport and will help articulate the vision and aspirations for the locality, better positioning it within the Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs. The dialogue is a move away from the Regional Commentary process and will not include a review of current work. Its focus will be on looking forward; enabling councils to identify and negotiate support from NDPBs and the emerging culture and sport improvement networks.



Leadership

Strengthening the political and management leadership was a key element to the improvement framework and has been identified as a priority. We have undertaken two main initiatives this year to drive awareness and build capacity.

Member Leadership Academy

Leicester City Council co-hosted the first Leadership Academy for members with responsibility for culture and sport in October 2008. Sixteen members attended, participating in an exciting programme that looked at the role of culture and sport in the city's approach to regeneration, health improvement and community cohesion.

A second programme took place in February 2009, co-hosted by South Tyneside Council, with a focus on the role of culture and sport in delivering key outcomes and contributing to community wellbeing.

If you would like to find out more about the Leadership Academy please go to www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8599070

"The time I spent at the Leadership Academy course on culture and sport, was of great benefit to me and to my Council. We are currently working in partnership with other local authorities to prepare a joint cultural strategy, and the information given during the course, as well as the onsite visit, and networking with other councillors, has allowed me to present to our officers policies and plans which are of inestimable benefit to us. Thank you to everyone involved for their dedication, knowledge and skill."

Cllr. Mrs Fabian Craig-Wilson, Fylde Borough Council

"The sharing and transfer of knowledge from experienced members and members with less experience creates and opportunity to expand and move forward."

Cllr Joe Naitt, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, Derby City Council

"I enjoyed this training session. I thought it was the best value for council money I have ever spent on training sessions and seminars. The mix of theory and practical was very good and I thought it was provoking, stimulating and built a perspective for developing strategies."

Cllr Maurice Groves, L B Merton Lower Morden,
Cabinet Member for Community Services

"I found the course very stimulating and valued meeting councillors from around the country."

Cllr Nick Thomas, Chichester District Council

Leading Learning programme

The first National Culture Forum-sponsored officer leadership programme, Leading Learning, launched in October 2008 with a three-day intense residential course, followed by a further one in February 2009. Twenty-eight future leaders are currently participating in the first of three programmes aimed at improving the leadership capacity in the sector.

"Leading Learning has been much more than the average leadership programme. It has been both challenging and inspirational. As a sector more than ever we need to understand our role in leading and managing change. Leading Learning is providing a challenging, rewarding and positive learning experience to enable cultural leaders to make this role count and deliver improvements in communities that often only culture and sport can deliver."

Richard Hunt, Head of Culture, Sport and Communities, Suffolk County Council



Learning and Sharing

Regional events

Following the launch of the strategy in March 2008 we held nine events in each of the English regions. These enabled us to share the key messages from *A Passion for Excellence* and also helped regions consider how they may develop their own improvement networks and share learning across the sector. The events were well attended by councils, with 266 officers and 21 members attending along with 123 representatives from the NDPBs and other agencies. Over 50% of all councils were represented including 100% of Counties, 66% of other single-tier councils and 35% of District Councils.

Further to this the IDeA has set up regular email alerts with 209 councils, keeping them up to date with new information and initiatives.

IDeA Knowledge

In September 2008 IDeA launched a new website on IDeA Knowledge which provided a single platform of information for councils on culture and sport improvement, including a growing range of good practice and case study material. www.idea.gov.uk/cultureandsport

Improvement pilots

2008 saw the culmination of eight pilot improvement programmes covering a range of locally led initiatives including peer-supported improvement, advocacy, third sector procurement, and public value among others. The evaluation and dissemination was completed as part of the regional awareness events and a summary report published. The report highlighted the opportunities and difficulties in establishing cross sector and cross agency improvement support programmes that provided valuable learning for the emerging improvement networks.

www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8722793



Self-assessment and external challenge

Over the last year four councils have utilised the IDeA validation process. A further 23 councils from London, five councils and the County Sport Partnership in Suffolk and 13 councils in Lancashire are undertaking peer-supported improvement activity. A recent survey of councils carried out by the IDeA showed that 70% of respondents had already used existing self-assessment tools including Towards an Excellence Service (TAES), Arts @ the Strategic Centre, Inspiring Learning for All, or the Library Peer review and 57% indicated that they intended to use the new culture and sport improvement toolkit. With over 40 practicing officers accredited as IDeA peers to support improvement activity, the culture and sport sector has made good progress and is on its way to being fully engaged with processes of self-improvement.

The culture and sport improvement toolkit

The culture and sport improvement toolkit supports self-improvement by offering a new approach to self-assessment and improvement planning, focusing on: organisations capacity; performance management and relationships with key partners.

The toolkit offers a new benchmark, validation, peer review and other forms of support and helps you improve how culture and sport are positioned in local sustainable community strategies and local area agreements (LAAs) and how they deliver measurable outcomes for communities and people, performance and impact.

If you would like to find out more about the culture and sport improvement toolkit please go to www.idea.gov.uk

Strategic commissioning

Strategic commissioning is fast becoming common practice across all public services. The culture and sport organisations recognises the need to improve both how it commissions to achieve local outcomes and respond better to commissioning processes going on in health, adult care and children's services. A commissioning framework, along with associated guidance on needs assessment, option appraisal and building capacity in the third sector, has been developed and forms the basis of learning workshops being delivered across the country in 2009.

www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=9202260

Measuring outcomes and impact

While the new national indicators and other surveys will provide quantifiable evidence of our impact on participation, demonstrating the impact our sector has on outcomes remains more complicated. An increasing number of councils such as Newham, Manchester, Sunderland, Shropshire and Wigan are now investing in measuring impact. The LAA process will provide the sector with a major opportunity to collect and collate a wide range of evidence demonstrating not just how we have increased participation but the difference it has made to peoples lives, providing we can find a coherent and consistent way of collecting this evidence. Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is leading the development of an 'Outcomes Tool' to be introduced in 2009. The online facility will allow councils and their partners to enter data in a consistent way and so allow culture and sport to better demonstrate impact, and compare data to underpin improvement.



“It [the toolkit] has helped identify improvement needs and is do-able and practical. It will also help position culture within the LSP.”

Liz Borthwick, Spelthorne Borough Council

“The engagement of our team in the single improvement process was particularly useful in breaking down barriers between services. It is getting people to think creatively about future cross-boundary service development and improvement.”

Iain Varah, London Borough of Redbridge

“The toolkit definitely helped our positioning with senior managers in the county council, including the chief executive. It brought the family of cultural services together in a helpful way – we are split around the authority – and provided useful feedback from external partners. This reinforced some positive feelings about our partnership working.”

David Grocott, Gloucestershire County Council

Other initiatives

Living Places

Living Places is about helping to create thriving, vibrant communities through culture and sport particularly in areas of housing growth and renewal. The project aims to provide those who are shaping communities with information, advice and support on the use of culture and sport to create better places. It also plans to better align investment from the sporting and cultural sector with sustainable communities funding and empower communities to make cultural and sporting activity and infrastructure part of their lives. Living Places currently focuses on five locations: Thames Gateway; the South West; Corby; Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH); and Pennine Lancashire.

In 2009/10 Living Places will launch the Culture and Sport Planning Toolkit to support the delivery of culture and sport opportunity through the planning system. To find out more about Living Places please go to www.living-places.org.uk

Sea Change

Sea Change is a capital grants programme of £45 million over three years given to English local authorities with seaside resorts which must be match funded, a minimum of 50% for grants up to £1m, and a minimum of 100% over £2m. Funding is for a range of cultural, heritage or public space projects including, but not limited to, theatres, museums, libraries, galleries, archives, outdoor performance spaces, landscapes, or projects which promote new forms of cultural engagement. To find out more about Sea Change please go to www.cabe.org.uk

Heritage Champions

English Heritage has extended their network of Heritage Champions so that they are now in place in 75% of all local authorities. Champions are normally Councillors (though some are officers) who have been selected by their authority to represent historic environment related issues within local authority forums. English Heritage provides Champions with training, advice, guidance and networking opportunities to support them in undertaking their advocacy role. To find out more about Heritage Champions please go to www.helm.org.uk

Self-assessment and peer review of Arts Council regularly funded organisations

Arts Council England is planning to introduce new processes of self-assessment and peer review for its regularly funded organisations. The development and introduction of these processes will be a major element in its ambition to strengthen relationships with regularly funded organisations in order to reinforce the importance of artistic excellence at the heart of everything it does.





Local authorities are key funding partners for the Arts Council and many arts organisations are jointly funded. It would be a great benefit to organisations to reduce the need for different reporting systems. As far as possible, Arts Council England would like to design the self-assessment framework in a way which can meet the needs of both the organisation and all their funders.

The new self-assessment processes, with guidance and a programme of briefing and induction, will be launched towards the end of 2009, in time to take effect from April 2010. Some aspects of peer review will be introduced during 2009/10. For up-to-date information on the development of the process contact paul.blaker@artscouncil.org.uk.

Library Service Modernisation Review

This Review, which was launched by Andy Burnham in October 2008, seeks to define the Government's vision for a modern, world-class public library service and sets out some of the necessary steps to achieving that vision. It will support local authority leaders, members and policy-makers in better understanding the value of their library service as a delivery tool for local priorities, and indicate how all services can reach the level of the best, while encouraging the best to go further. It will encourage innovative and joined-up approaches to service delivery, and the local application of the strategic vision to suit community needs. The review's findings will be published in spring 2009.



Use of Historic Places of Worship

'Places of worship, as well as being a vital part of our heritage, can provide facilities for community, cultural and sporting activities. Faith groups, in looking at ways of making their buildings more sustainable as part of the heritage, are considering how their buildings can better serve local communities. The Government is supporting this initiative by reviewing with faith groups, including the Church of England, opportunities for recognising their contribution to communities, including in the areas of culture and tourism.

A report to be published later this year will, among other areas, look at how public authorities, including local authorities could better support historic places of worship as they seek to diversify, by making use of the assets on offer and encouraging others to do the same.'

In a specific scheme launched by Andy Burnham in December 2008, English Heritage is offering funding to faith groups to employ Support Officers, who can help congregations with all aspects of managing their historic buildings, including use by the wider community. For more information go to www.english-heritage.org.uk/inspired



Sport England strategy – 2008/11

In June 2008 Sport England launched a new strategy to help community sport make the most of the unparalleled opportunities presented by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The strategy commits Sport England to deliver on a series of demanding targets by 2012/13:

- one million people doing more sport
- a 25% reduction in the number of 16-19 year olds who drop out of five key sports
- improved talent development systems in at least 25 sports
- a measurable increase in people's satisfaction with their experience of sport
- a major contribution to the delivery of the five-hour sports offer for children and young people

Sport England's ambition is to create a vibrant sporting culture where people of all ages and abilities have opportunities to play, enjoy and excel at sport in every community. It is seeking a new partnership between government, its agencies and the national governing bodies of sport. It is also continuing to work alongside local authorities, who drive local provision and who are key partners in delivering a world-leading community sport system. Sport England and the Local Government Association (LGA) have published a joint sport policy statement outlining how Sport England and local authorities can work together to achieve the aims of the strategy and local authorities' priorities.

To implement its strategy, Sport England has also published a new funding strategy setting out the investment programmes that will be available to organisations delivering grassroots sport from April 2009. *Funding sport in the community* explains how investment will be focused on organisations and projects that can deliver the key outcomes of Sport England's overall strategy – 'grow, sustain and excel'.



The Sport England strategy can be accessed at www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/resource_downloads/sport_england_strategy.htm

The Sport England funding strategy can be accessed at www.sportengland.org/sport_england_funding_strategy_20090106.pdf

03

The next twelve months

Over the next twelve months the partnership behind *A Passion for Excellence* will work with individual councils and regional networks to help them deliver continuous improvement in culture and sport, driving up participation. They will deliver the programmes and activity outlined in this document, as well as focus on those listed below.

Key priorities for next year will be:

- 1. Supporting councils deliver their LAA improvement targets by:**
 - developing a strategic dialogue with councils in each of the regions
 - targeting a programme of tailored support to councils seeking to make significant service improvements
 - offering peer-based support to local improvement networks and individual councils
 - providing advice and guidance on National Indicators and other data
 - sharing learning across the sector on the delivery of improvement targets and improving participation.
- 2. Continuing to improve leadership and skills across the sector by:**
 - delivering two further leadership academies for elected members
 - delivering a further programme for senior managers through the National Culture Forum Leading Learning programme
 - continuing the strengthening of strategic commissioning across the sector
 - providing opportunities to share learning.
- 3. Continuing to improve facilities and services by:**
 - providing a range of service-based toolkits that help improve existing services and help plan new ones.
- 4. Developing a greater evidence base for the impact of culture and sport by:**
 - providing a means of consistently measuring impact and outcomes better across the sector
 - developing a range of evidenced-based case studies and advocacy material to help councils position culture and sport in local strategies
 - supporting councils through the introduction of the CAA.



Acknowledgements

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Credits

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department for
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2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
www.culture.gov.uk



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FOR THE ENGLISH REGIONS