



department for  
**culture, media  
and sport**

# Government Response to the Lifting the Burdens Taskforce Review of the Department for Culture Media and Sport

July 2008

improving  
the quality  
of life for all

Our aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

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# Section 1: DCMS Response

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The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) welcomes the Taskforce's report. In particular we are pleased that it recognises the work the Department has done to mitigate against the development of an excessively burdensome regime. For example under the Prime Minister's instructions all Government Departments are required to minimize the financial burden of local authorities or businesses who participate in surveys. DCMS has one of the lowest compliance costs across 22 government departments, agencies and executives.

The report seeks to shape the future policy direction of the Department in relation to local government, encouraging more of a focus on outcomes and better strategic co-ordination of our regional delivery partners. We welcome its core recommendation that more co-ordination at a national and regional level would help local authorities to effectively plan and deliver local priorities as well as preventing the system from becoming excessively burdensome in the future.

There is now an appetite for change and a desire to address weaknesses across the sector in a collaborative way. We are committed to addressing the issues raised in the report as part of our response to the new local government performance framework and the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy. A major part of this response is the production of an improvement strategy for the culture and sport sector, launched by Andy Burham, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on 14 March 2008, which we believe will respond positively to the findings and recommendations of the Task Force's report.

[www.culture.gov.uk/Reference\\_library/Publications/archive\\_2008/passionfor\\_excellence.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2008/passionfor_excellence.htm)

This strategy is designed to enable local authorities and their partners to maximise the contribution of culture and sport to improving the quality of life in places and delivering better public services. It focuses on local government led improvement, outcomes for local people and identifies what each of our key stakeholders will contribute to support local government and its partners.

The improvement strategy is just one strand of the Department's focus on better outcomes and improving delivery at regional and local level.

As a result of our Capability Review, DCMS has undergone a transformation programme and a key part of that is to focus better on the cross-government place-shaping agenda by leading and contributing strategically where necessary and disengaging from low impact transactional activity. In practice that is likely to mean:

- a clearer focus on our strategic goals of promoting excellence, unlocking human potential and improving well-being;
- project-based working through the *Living Places* partnership (i.e. on culture and sport in planning for sustainable communities) and *Sea Change* (the capital investment programme for the cultural regeneration of seaside resorts); [www.living-places.org.uk](http://www.living-places.org.uk); and [www.cabe.org.uk/seachange](http://www.cabe.org.uk/seachange)
- ensuring that our public bodies are fully engaged with the negotiation of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) where culture and sport has a role to play, and in helping to deliver against relevant LAA improvement targets; the latest position on local area agreements suggests that our bodies are fully engaged in the process. We are also ensuring that their role of named partners with a duty to co-operate is included in the next round of funding agreements.
- improving the evidence base through more systematic monitoring of a small number of indicators at local as well as national level. DCMS have four indicators in the new performance framework and the data is being collected via Sport England's Active People survey.

Our response to the recommendations of the report is set out in more detail in Appendix A.

# Appendix A: Performance Measurement & Improvement

## Government Response to the Lifting the Burdens Taskforce Review of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, October 2007:

Recommendation	Commentary
<b>Performance Measurement &amp; Improvement</b>	
<p>1. There are gaps and inconsistencies in performance measurement – processes are now coming together, but there remains an inconsistent approach across the sector.</p> <p>As the Local Government Association's 'Taking Part' publication has recognised, a focus on participation as the means by which a range of social and economic outcomes are supported, is widely accepted, but further work should be undertaken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• streamline national data collection outside of the national indicator set;</li> <li>• provide local service providers with sufficient and appropriate data to plan and manage;</li> <li>• ensure that where research is required, it is procured cost effectively;</li> <li>• integrate national and local data collection to help minimise burdens;</li> <li>• develop hard evidence to support culture's contribution to strategic outcome objectives;</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS commissioned a scoping study on how its current data collection programme might be transformed to meet the demand for local area data. Issues such as streamlining the local and national indicator set as well as options for managing a new system were considered as part of this process. A wide range of stakeholders were consulted on the various options. As a result it was agreed that data for the local indicator set would be collected using the Sport England Active People Survey. Sport England's Active People Survey was already established to collect data on sports participation. The three cultural indicators have been added to this survey to collect data. Similar questions have also been included in the Taking Part Survey to provide an indicative national comparison.</p> <p>DCMS is developing a strategic research capability with key Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) to better identify strategic indicators across its sectors. Evidence gathered here will support culture's contribution to strategic objectives as well as determine measures for impact on well-being.</p> <p>Due to the small number of surveys we undertake each year, DCMS have one of the lowest compliance costs</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop outcome focused performance measures over the next three years that demonstrate impact on health, well being and place-shaping.</li> </ul>	<p>across 22 government department, agencies and executives.</p>
<p>2. There is an emerging improvement agenda, but this needs further communication and clarification, including strengthening the focus and leadership of those advisory and regulatory bodies involved in order to move to a positive position of ‘shared understanding, mutual support and investment of resources’.</p>	<p>DCMS is working with its strategic NDPBs and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to encourage greater emphasis on self-improvement in local authority culture and leisure services consistent with the cross-government approach set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Culture and Sport Improvement Strategy was launched at the LGA’s annual conference on Culture, Sport and Tourism. This strategy is being followed up by a detailed action plan of support for the sector and we have already commissioned a project to provide leadership training for members and one to provide specific support to councils or areas to drive forward their improvement agenda.</p> <p>Further projects will be commissioned during the year as needs are identified by local and regional partners</p>



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