



A Passion for Excellence

An improvement strategy for
culture and sport

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An improvement strategy for culture and sport

Including:

performing and visual arts, craft, and fashion

museums, artefacts, archives and design

libraries, literature, writing and publishing

the built heritage, architecture, landscape and archaeology

sports events, facilities and development

tourism and visitor attractions

parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environment and countryside recreation

children's play, playgrounds and play activities

festivals and attractions

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Foreword

Culture and sport are the glue that holds communities together. Local teams, theatres, festivals and galleries are all sources of interest, entertainment, income, and above all, local pride. People like to have a local cinema showing the latest films, theatres and galleries to visit, and buildings that capture the imagination. Parents want safe and exciting places close to home where their children can play. Fans want successful and entertaining local teams to follow and clubs with strong identities true to their roots. People feel better about themselves and where they live when they have these things.

While culture and sport are valued highly by people for their own sakes, they have an even greater resonance for local authorities: they can contribute substantially to the local economy, to improving people's health and wellbeing – especially young people – and to the strength and safety of communities in general.

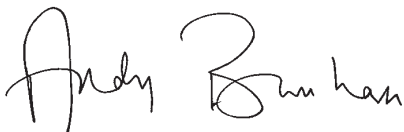
By making the most of sporting and cultural opportunities, local authorities can improve the quality of service to their local communities, and this strategy helps with that by weaving together three key developments.

The first is the increasing recognition of the value of culture and sport in the wider economy. The creative industries, for instance, have been growing at twice the rate of the economy as a whole and represent a major opportunity for local authorities looking to bring jobs and prosperity to their regions.

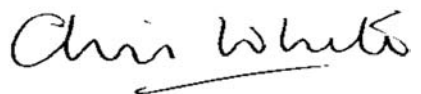
A second development is greater emphasis on expertise and good judgement when looking to improve standards and raise performance. This strategy is a green light for leaders in local government to look to themselves and colleagues – through self-assessment, peer review, and strong leadership – when it comes to identifying what needs fixing in terms of the delivery of local services, and what works best.

The third strand is the advice to push money and responsibility down and out to the lowest possible levels, to be open-minded about who is best placed to deliver services, to trust partners in the private and voluntary sectors, and to trust people in the community to know what cultural and sporting services they want and need.

Together these three strands provide a potent formula for delivering excellent sporting and cultural services for healthier, stronger communities.



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



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

1. Purpose and context

This strategy is about supporting local government as “leaders of place”, working with their local partners to deliver better outcomes, improve the quality of life locally and improve the delivery of cultural and sport services to local people.

Purpose

The strategy sets a framework for improvement in the culture and sport sector and includes the mechanisms and tools to support self-improvement. It also clarifies the respective roles and responsibilities in delivering the strategy of all the major stakeholders in the culture and sport sector, in line with the National Performance Framework and the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy.

The strategy aims to create a strong framework 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 co-ordinate the improvement architecture.

Box 1.1: Definition of culture and sport

By “culture and sport” we mean:

- the performing and visual arts, craft, and fashion
- the creative industries
- museums, artefacts, archives and design
- libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- the built heritage, architecture, landscape and archaeology
- sports events, facilities and development
- parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environment and countryside recreation
- children's play, playgrounds and play activities
- tourism and visitor attractions
- festivals and attractions
- informal leisure pursuits.

Box 1.2: Stakeholders

Stakeholders

For the purpose of the strategy the focus has been on the following stakeholders:

- local authorities
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Non-Departmental Public Bodies (Sport England, Arts Council, MLA and English Heritage)
- Regional Cultural Consortiums
- Local Government Association
- Improvement and Development Agency
- Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association
- professional bodies representing people working in culture and sport
- National Culture Forum
- Audit Commission.

Other stakeholders such as the Children’s Play Council, Play England, Commission for Architecture and Built Environment, Destination Performance UK and the Regional Development Agencies also have key roles to play in the delivery of the strategy and are considered as valued partners.

It must be recognised that the delivery system for most of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies extends beyond local government; therefore the improvement strategy is primarily but not solely focused on local government.

Arts Council England for example works with and supports many arts organisations independent of local government but which are integral to the concept of “place shaping”, as does the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with independent museums. As part of its Strategy Review, Sport England is also considering how improvement can help support the delivery of a world class community sport infrastructure.

It is intended however that there will be consistency and alignment wherever this is practical and appropriate and no parallel arrangement with local government will be created.

The national context

Central and local government share a vision for better, more efficient, more responsive public services that ensure greater local prosperity and environmental sustainability. The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy sets out a strong framework for supporting improvement and efficiency, which is owned and driven forward by local government and its strategic partners. It highlights four principles that guide the strategy, in line with the Local Government White Paper and the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act 2007:

- 1 Improvement of local public services is led by councils working in partnership with local communities and other public service providers.
- 2 Improvement will be made more effective by devolving more central resources as close to the front line as possible and creating space for greater local decision making by councils together with their partners.
- 3 Strategic planning of improvement needs to become stronger, through greater joint decision making on the resources available to support local improvement, innovation, and efficiency.
- 4 The arrangements for offering improvement and efficiency support from both central and local government need to be more effective, simplified and rationalised.

There is an expectation that local government and partners will take on increasing responsibility across a range of improvement issues. Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships will be at the heart of local arrangements for supporting councils and local partners, enabling them to take a stronger lead on performance and improvement and to support them in the development of their own capacity.

The Culture and Sport Improvement Strategy both aligns with and supports the delivery of the national strategy.

While the culture and sport sector has over recent years made significant progress in addressing its own improvement the strategy comes at a time when the sector faces some significant challenges:

- while the value of culture and sport is recognised as important in people's lives and the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) saw overall scores improve, the sector has the lowest proportion of councils achieving the top two categories of any service assessment
- the new economic role of councils is one where culture and sport can have a powerful impact on local renewal, however councils are required to find a further 3% efficiency savings
- the new performance framework raises new challenges around participation, while customer expectations are rising and competition for people's time has never been higher.

Research shows that participation in culture and sport can play an important role in communities:

- 94% of people said that they had done a cultural or sporting activity at least once in the last 12 months. (*Taking Part, DCMS, 2006*)
- the Taking Part survey shows that those participating in cultural activities were 20% more likely to know 'many people' in their neighbourhood and around 60% more likely to believe that 'many of their neighbours can be trusted'. Importantly these figures hold for those from lower socio-economic groups, with the trust figure still high at 40%. (*Taking Part, DCMS, 2006*)
- people who participate in cultural activities are more likely than the average citizen to have trust in the police, legal system, politicians and Parliament. (*Culture, Participation and Civil Renewal, IPPR, 2006*)
- the Home Office Citizenship Survey suggested that sport and exercise is the single greatest contributor to social participation (51%). (*Home Office Citizenship Survey, 2001*)
- there is a significant link between participation in cultural activity and people being satisfied with the area in which they live. In inner city areas those who participated in culture were 10% more likely to be satisfied with where they live, compared to those who did not participate. (*DCMS, internal analysis of Taking Part survey data, 2007*)
- 70% of young people believe that a lack of positive activities provision leads to more youth crime. (*MORI, 2002*)
- when asked, activities for teenagers are the local issue that most people want to see improved (39%). (*Audit Commission, CPA – The Harder Test, 2007*)
- around 80% of people believe that participating in sport teaches respect for others and increases people's involvement in community activities. 76% of people believe that participating in sporting activities reduces anti-social behaviour/crime among young people. (*MORI research, 2004*)



2. Supporting local government

The following section sets out how the culture and sport sector will address its own improvement. It sets out the main components of its improvement framework which together will form the basis of sector led improvement.

Research and evidence across public services suggest that there is no single tool or technique that drives improvement and delivers efficiency, but that a combination of factors (user focus, innovation, challenge, benchmarking, workforce skills) and direct actions to enhance efficiency (e.g. business process improvement, better use of technology) lead to success.

What is clear from the wider work on local government improvement is that progress has been achieved when those involved in delivery have taken ownership of the improvement agenda.

Improvement is most successful when three inter-dependent processes take place: **monitoring, challenge, and support underpinned by leadership:**

Monitoring: access to quality, up-to-date, relevant data which enables benchmarking against clearly defined local, regional and national goals, objectives and targets. Also using research and qualitative measurement techniques to evidence the impact culture and sport has on outcomes and people's lives.

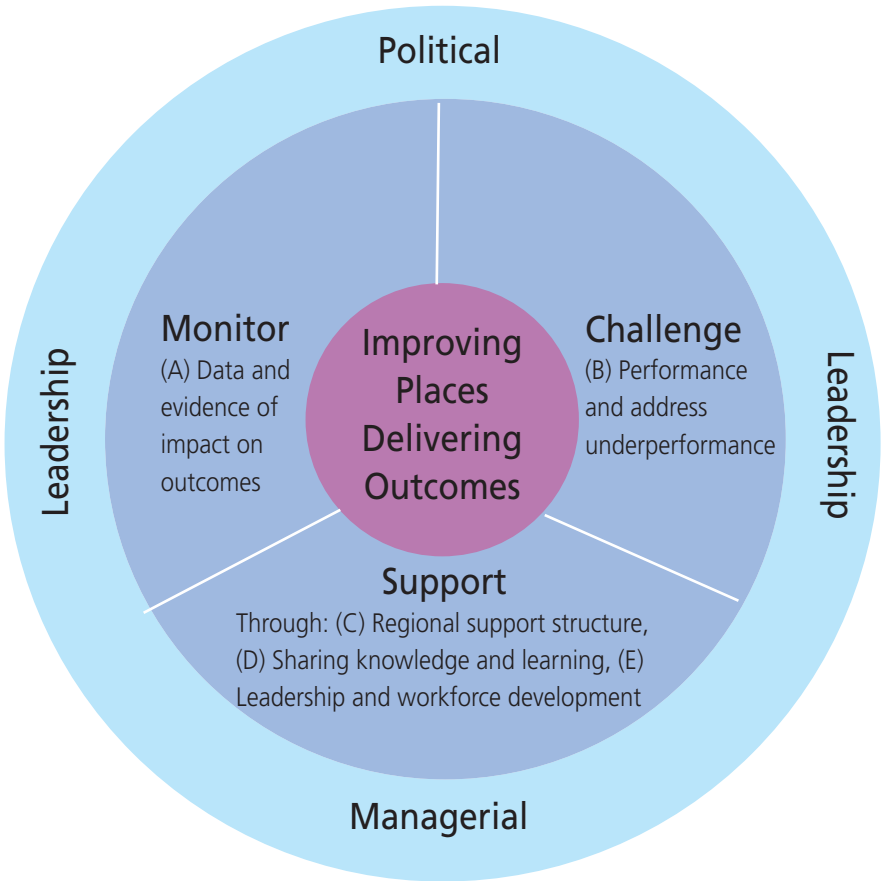
Challenge: open to both self- and external assessment, of your organisation's performance and ways of working. Being open to challenge and responding constructively to continually improve. Challenge will range from self-challenge through self-assessment and the use of critical friends, to external challenge through validation, accreditation and peer review.

Support: providing knowledge and learning through helping others to improve and learn. Specific priorities in culture and sport that need to be addressed include: strengthening political and managerial leadership; developing and maintaining core competencies and skills within those working in the sector; strengthening the positioning of culture and sport in key cross cutting agendas and local and national outcomes; strengthening partnership working; strengthening performance management; strengthening strategic commissioning and procurement; facilitating innovation and learning from innovation.

Leadership: these three processes will need to be underpinned by effective leadership. Culture and sport have been most successful where there is focused political and managerial leadership with strong vision, and commitment to advocate for the value and contribution of the sector and drive continuous improvement. Leadership is critical to achieving effective service delivery, managing change and maintaining good governance. The sector will need to develop its leadership skills and abilities among its leaders, both elected members and managers, if it is to achieve local priorities and deliver agreed outcomes.

Diagram A: Framework for culture and sport sector led improvement

Culture and sport sector led improvement framework



Monitoring tools

- National indicator set
- Voluntary business improvement benchmarks
- National impact library
- Regional commentaries

Challenging tools

- Self assessment
- Peer led challenge
- Validation
- Peer review
- Facility accreditation

Supporting tools

- Regional improvement networks
- Knowledge and learning
- Workforce development
- Leadership development

Key components to support improvement

The key components of the improvement strategy are designed to address and support the requirements of the national strategy, e.g. help improve outcomes, address underperformance, facilitate sector leadership and simplify improvement support.

The components are designed to enable the sector to be better at the **monitoring, challenge, support and leadership functions**:

These are intended to improve:

- data and evidence of impact on outcomes
- performance and address underperformance
- regional support structures
- sharing of knowledge and learning
- leadership and workforce development.

Box 2.1: The role of culture and sports in place shaping

Over recent years, extensive work has been done to help advocate the value of culture and sport in meeting community needs and aspirations and its role in supporting the “place shaping agenda”. Some recent key reference documents include:

- Living Places – *Building communities through culture and sport*: www.living-places.org.uk
- Cultural Pathfinder publication – *Changing Lives and Places*: www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2007/lessons_culturalpathfinders.htm and www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=777739
- Solace Foundation Imprint – *Inspiring our ambition through sport, art, culture and place*: www.sfi.uk.com/publications.htm
- Taking part counts – *The contribution of art culture and sport to national outcomes*: www.lga.gov.uk/lga/publications/publication-display.do?id=21121
- The North West Improvement Pilot has also been looking at the “public value” of culture and sport and will be reporting shortly on the outcome of this work.

A. Improving data and evidence of impact on outcomes

The new National Performance Framework sets out the only **national performance indicators** used by national government. The indicators will prove a valuable tool and have been developed to reflect the government’s national priorities. The 198 indicators will be the only measures on which central government will performance manage outcomes delivered by local government. From April 2008 other indicators including “best value” performance indicators will be abolished.

Box 2.2: Eleven outcomes for the National Indicator Set

The 198 indicators are set against 11 outcomes:

- stronger communities
- safer communities
- children and young people (be healthy)
- children and young people (stay safe)
- children and young people (enjoy and achieve)
- children and young people (make a positive contribution)
- children and young people (economic wellbeing)
- adult health and wellbeing
- tackling exclusion and promoting equality
- local economy
- environmental stability.

Of the 198 national performance indicators four relate directly to culture and sport and three will require a significant contribution from culture and sport to help deliver three specific outcomes. More detail about the indicators is shown in the Appendix.

Table 2.3: Culture and sport related National Indicators

Outcome	National Indicator
Stronger communities	Adult participation in sport and active recreation (NI 8)
	Use of public libraries (NI 9)
	Visit to museums and galleries (NI 10)
	Engagement in the arts (NI 11)
	Participation in regular volunteering (NI 6)
Children and young people (be healthy)	Children and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport (NI 57)
Children and young people (make a positive contribution)	Young people's participation in positive activities (NI 110)

There are a range of further indicators where locally culture and sport can contribute to other outcomes, for example:

Table 2.4: National Indicators where culture and sport can contribute

Outcome	National Indicator
Stronger communities	Overall/general satisfaction with local area (NI 5)
	Environment for a thriving third sector (NI 7)
Children and young people (be healthy)	Obesity among primary school age children in reception year (NI 55)
	Obesity among primary school age children in year 6 (NI 56)
Adult health and wellbeing	Self reported measure of people’s overall health and wellbeing (NI 119)
Local economy	Satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services (NI 182)

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) will be negotiated to reflect a shared view of local priorities as defined by the Local Strategic Partnership in the local Sustainable Community Strategy. They will reflect a mixture of remedial targets for improving against underperformance and improvement targets for meeting higher ambitions. They will include up to 35 targets from among the national indicators, complemented by 16 statutory targets on educational attainment and early years and any local targets.

Local Strategic Partnerships may choose to include one or more of the four culture and sport performance indicators as designated improvement targets within the 35, as a local target or incorporate culture and sport as contributing to other outcomes.

Where councils and a Local Strategic Partnership wish to incorporate culture and sport in their LAA and need support in drafting the LAA and delivering it, this will be provided through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport representative in the Government Office and the respective Non-Departmental Public Bodies. The Non-Departmental Public Bodies nationally are currently developing guidance and advice to councils and some regions are developing toolkits to support the process.

Box 2.5: Positioning culture and sport within Local Area Agreements

The South East region has developed a new web based toolkit to support the positioning of culture and sport in LAAs. www.seco.org.uk/laatoolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to support Local Strategic Partnerships to embed culture and sport within their Local Area Agreement, provide clarity about how culture can support the aims of the sustainable community strategy and to raise awareness of the important contribution that culture and sport can bring to community life. The toolkit aims to link culture to national and regional strategies as well as with key policy areas. This will support local authority officers who want to make a strong case for culture to be recognised as a local priority. We aim to keep the toolkit up to date with key policy changes as they happen and at regular times throughout the year.

The regional Cultural Improvement Partnership East Midlands has also produced a briefing note aimed at supporting colleagues within local authorities and their partner organisations tasked with seeking to embed culture into new style Local Area Agreements.

The guidance is available at www.cipem.org.uk/LAA-briefings.html

Box 2.6: Voluntary business improvement benchmarking

In addition to the national indicators there may be a need to use a range of voluntary benchmarks that assist with the measurement of business improvement and which can be used for benchmarking and improvement support. They are available from:

- National Benchmarking Service:
www.questnbs.info/index.cfm?fuseaction=c.showWelcome
- Association of Public Service Excellence:
www.apse.org.uk/performance-network.html
- Audit Commission Library of Local indicators: www.local-pi-library.gov.uk
- Library benchmark: www.mla.gov.uk/policy/improvement
- CIPFA has collected and published statistics on libraries, and archives, and charges for leisure, culture, sport and recreation services for many years. Extensive information is available on their website: www.cipfastats.net/leisure/default.asp
- on parks there are resources at: www.cabe.org.uk/AssetLibrary/4556.pdf and www.green-space.org.uk/improvement/greenspaceresearch.php
- See also Audit commission standards on data quality:
www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryId=&ProdID=F4E13DD0-2808-4f3a-98FF-358AF9010155

Evidence of impact – Data is important to measuring performance and improvement. As in many other public services, demonstrating change in social and economic outcomes takes time often requiring longitudinal studies and research. Cause and effect relationships are often difficult to evidence and prove, and data is often not cost effective to collect.

As a result proxy measures or outputs are often used, as in the case of sport and physical activity participation. Here medical evidence from outside the sector has confirmed the health benefits of physical activity, allowing Sport England to develop an output indicator based on the level of adult participation at levels of activity required to achieve these health benefits.

Evidence of the wider social and economic benefits of culture and sport are less well documented and accepted even though many people would acknowledge their importance and value. These benefits include education and learning, other aspects of health improvement including extending independent living in the older population, community cohesion, community safety and anti-social behaviour and economic development, including tourism.

Over recent years the sector has started to build up a more comprehensive evidence base using qualitative evidence and case studies. These include: the Beacon Awards for “Culture and Sport for Hard to Reach Groups”, the Cultural Pathfinder Programme, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council’s work on *Inspiring Learning for All* (ILFA) and Generic Social Outcomes (GSO), work on the creative industries by the South West Regional Cultural Consortium, as well as work being done by individual authorities such as Newham, Shropshire and Manchester.

To date qualitative evidence has not been underpinned by any common methodologies. This has hindered the development of a substantial cohesive evidence base that can be used nationally or regionally to demonstrate the impact of culture and sport on community outcomes.

The sector will now develop a better mechanism for improving the overall evidence base by better co-ordinating the collection of impact evidence. In the first instance rather than stimulating new research this may mean collating the outputs from specific projects, LAA delivery and other local authority promoted research along with national/regional programmes. However where clear gaps exist joint or shared commissioning of specific research may be viable where resources are available.

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council will continue to develop ILFA and GSOs as resources which help organisations deliver better services and projects which lead to positive local outcomes. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council intends to develop these further as tools which can support the place of the sector in LAAs by providing robust outcome measures and an evidence base of sectoral impact. As GSOs and ILFA rely upon a generic view of the contribution and maintenance of social capital, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council will work with partners in local government and with its partners in the national agencies for culture and sport to roll out ILFA and the GSOs as a resource for all culture and sport services in 2008/09.

In addition, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has expressed interest in exploring how far ILFA can be developed to capture the wider accountable measures of the new school curriculum. This activity will, therefore, form one part of the proposed development package.

Over time this approach can lead to the creation of a voluntary **national library of evidence and impact** to underpin the proposed output measures relating to participation in the new performance framework and help councils better demonstrate, advocate and make the case for culture and sport in the future.

Box 2.7: Evidence based impact studies

A range of evidence based impact studies are now starting to emerge with other research planned including the impact of children’s play provision. A selection of recent work includes:

- the Cultural Pathfinder Programme evaluation:
www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/rands/research/cultural_pathfinder.htm
- Cultural Pathfinder publication – *Changing Lives and Places*:
www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2007/lessons_culturalpathfinders.htm
- The Beacon Scheme – *Culture and sport for hard to reach groups*:
www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=5099109
- Newham Impact Report – *Building active and cohesive communities through culture and sport*: www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=5098657
- Impact and Values – *Assessing the arts and creative industries in the South West*:
www.creativebristol.com/impact_and_values.pdf
- *Sport playing its part*:
www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/shapingplaces.htm
- *Review of impact of museum, library and archive activity on children and young people*: www.mlanorthwest.org.uk/news/index.asp?id=677,55,2,55
- children and youth culture case studies:
www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=1074855

B. Improve performance and address underperformance

Self-assessment – To underpin self-improvement there has been significant investment in developing a wide range of service-specific improvement tools such as ILFA, *Arts at the strategic centre* and *Towards an Excellent Service* (TAES). Each has had an impact on driving service improvement.

A new *Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit* has been developed and piloted. It is based on a new benchmark that can be used across the sector for self assessment, externally challenged self-assessment and peer review.

The new toolkit will be available on the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) web site and accessible to any organisation wishing to undertake a self-assessment against it. It is hoped that the majority of councils and partner organisations will commit to a self assessment process as a consistent way of continuously improving the sector's delivery systems. The new toolkit includes the opportunity to involve the council at a corporate level, and the Local Strategic Partnerships, so helping to strengthen positioning and partnership working.

Peer led challenge – Recognising the importance of self-assessment, external challenge is also recommended as a valuable part of the process. This can be achieved by using a "critical friend". But where ambition is high, change is required or performance is below standard, a more robust process of external challenge is appropriate.

A number of Essex councils have successfully piloted Peer Led Challenge and Support. A group of authorities came together using TAES and created a network where they challenged each other's self-assessment and went on to support each other by sharing best practice and learning opportunities. The process, which is dependent on undertaking high quality peer training and undertaking the process to recognised standards of rigour, will be available for replication across the country.

Validation – Successfully developed with IDeA, based on the principles of peer review and used by a number of councils. The process involves an IDeA consultant and an IDeA accredited peer independently validating the self-assessment. There is a cost to the process which will depend on the scope of the assessment, but the use of accredited IDeA peers provides a degree of quality assurance and a significant development opportunity for the individuals involved. Validation is not seen as another accreditation scheme which 'Kitemarks' an organisation, but is seen as a key part of the self-improvement process.

Peer review - Recognised in the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy as a key vehicle for driving self-improvement and has been used with excellent results across the local government sector for a number of years. It has been used by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to help improve library services. In the future with the possible reductions in service inspections there may be increased demand for cross-service peer review using the new benchmark, particularly where there is significant risk of service failure or significant underperformance.

Peer support – Has important value in the improvement process because of the learning it brings to both parties and the ownership the process generates. It is also viewed as significantly less costly than the use of consultancy. However the lack of capacity in the sector is limiting the availability of peers. The IDeA Peer Clearing House will remain a source of peers with many serving local government officers in culture and sport now accredited. Professional bodies, especially the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA), may also be able to develop peer-based support arrangements for the sector. IDeA also has the ability to assist with associated activities such as Communities of Practice, Knowledge Exchange and Accelerated Improvement Consortiums.

Box 2.8: Validation, peer review, peer support and challenge

50 Councils have now completed or are undertaking a validated self-assessment using the IDeA validation service. Information on validation is available from IDeA Knowledge:

www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=7921070

17 Councils have completed a library or culture peer review information which is also available on IDeA Knowledge:

www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=7921072

Information about the Peer Clearing House is also available on:

www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=1701212

Information about Communities of Practice is available on:

www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=5897943

Improving facility and service standards – The new library benchmark, Quest, Green Flag, Museum Accreditation and the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) can all play an important and valuable role in improving the standards of the service offered to the public. Although using them as performance indicators is inappropriate in a local government context they are still a valuable part of the improvement framework for the sector as a whole.

As part of the strategy a key challenge is to work towards closer alignment over time so that while they might retain their individual identities and “badging”, evolution of the content and detail will mean they become more harmonious and relevant for service users.

Box 2.9: Accreditation

Over 650 sport and leisure facilities have now been accredited under Quest:
www.questnbs.info.

Over 550 parks and open spaces have been accredited under Green Flag:
www.greenflagaward.org.uk.

470 Museums are accredited under the Museums Accreditation Scheme:
www.mla.gov.uk/website/programmes/accreditation/accreditation

About 69% of councils now meet the library standards.

Identifying and addressing under performance – The sector has the ability to identify underperformance in a number of ways:

- through the self-assessment process
- by monitoring the new national performance indicators
- by monitoring improvement targets incorporated within LAAs
- through the proposed replacement for Regional Commentaries (culture and sport strategic reviews)
- through the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Risk Assessment.

Support to address underperformance can come from a number of sources:

- through the various processes of challenge and support offered by IDEa including peer led challenge, validation, peer review and or ongoing tailored support
- through the Culture and Sport Improvement Networks involving member councils, regional Non-Departmental Public Bodies and professional bodies
- from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency partnerships.

Box 2.10: Northamptonshire self assessment

In Northamptonshire a group of councils including a number of districts and the county council have worked together following the identification of Northampton Borough Council as poor under the CPA. The councils have undertaken a validated TAES self-assessment and have produced individual improvement plans. Together they have identified common areas for improvement and produced an over-arching improvement plan as the basis for sector led improvement. By learning from the different strengths of each other the network will support each other's improvement. Further support is being provided through the Culture Improvement Partnership East Midlands.

C. Improving and simplifying regional support for improvement

The National Improvement Strategy provides the impetus for greater devolution of improvement support to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships who will have a central role in defining and responding to regional improvement priorities. It is important that the culture and sport sector develops regional and sub-regional support arrangements that align with the new architecture.

Regional culture and sport improvement networks

In all of the regions, regional or sub-regional networks are developing to improve communication and support improvement work to one degree or another. In London, the East Midlands and the East of England the emerging networks have already created links with the Regional Improvement Partnerships and in some cases received funding from them.

In the future these networks will provide a direct link to the **Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships** who will work closely with local authorities and partners in the region to co-ordinate an analysis of regional improvement and capacity-building needs. This will be informed by LAA improvement priorities but also reflecting the support to

poor and weak authorities and their developing role in dealing with underperformance. The culture and sport networks will need to be able to both influence and inform emerging regional improvement strategies and the ongoing priorities of the partnerships.

Although the format and management of the culture and sport improvement networks will vary they should perform the following functions:

- supporting performance improvement in LAAs, Multi Area Agreements
- supporting workforce and staff development
- supporting innovation, dissemination of good practice and benchmarking
- advising on the improvement and capacity building needs for councils and other organisations in the region, and seeking resources to meet these needs from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships
- advising on how best to access and use any resource available to support improvement in the sector or specific councils.

Common governance arrangements should include:

- senior political and managerial representatives from all tiers of local government
- representatives of the main Non-Departmental Public Bodies supporting the sector in the region
- representation from the Regional Cultural Consortium
- representation from the Government Office
- representation from professional bodies.

Regional commentaries and culture and sport strategic review

Regional commentaries were produced for most single-tier authorities in 2007 and contributed to helping improve working relationships between agencies and local authorities. They identified improvement opportunities in local authorities and created a basis for regional agencies to discuss their contribution to improvement, either directly or indirectly. Ultimately it led to better dialogue between partners. However, the process was resource demanding and is not sustainable in its present format and approach. There is general consensus that Regional Commentaries should be followed up but should be modified in their resource requirements, timescales, output, and purpose.

Box 2.11: Culture and Sport Strategic Reviews

Culture and Sport Strategic Reviews – have been suggested as a starting point for consultation with the sector to evolve Regional Commentaries into a product and process that more efficiently supports the emerging regional improvement architecture.

It is believed that such reviews could:

- better align local, regional and national priorities for the sector within the Sustainable Community framework, and further strengthen working relationships between councils and regional agencies to achieve agreed improvement and delivery plans
- review progress against LAA targets, and local and national performance indicators
- identify and share best practice to encourage collective learning and effective knowledge management
- help develop a regional improvement strategy and plan to share with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

The format of the review could be:

- a meeting between councils making up the Local Strategic Partnership/LAA with sectoral responsibilities, the regional Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Regional Cultural Consortia, chaired by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport representative in the Government Office
- initially focused where a Local Strategic Partnership/LAA is identified as a “place priority” by one or more of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport or where places have clear aspirations to develop and improve
- preparation ahead of the meeting would use a form of self assessment or improvement planning by the Non-Departmental Public Bodies, Regional Cultural Consortia and the councils involved. The Single Improvement Tool could provide the basis for this.

The output of the review could be:

- confirmation of progress on the agreed actions from the first round of Regional Commentaries
- a summary identifying the key conclusions and actions which will form the basis of future work with the Local Strategic Partnership and inform the regional cultural improvement plan and CAA risk assessment requirements, subject to the final nature of the CAA
- a summary of best practice and improvement to be shared with the regional improvement network for action and response.

D. Improving knowledge-sharing and learning

Over recent years the sector has developed a number of opportunities to capture and share best practice and learning through the Beacon Scheme and Cultural Pathfinders. These and other materials are available on Cultural Connections accessed via IDeA Knowledge.

Most of the Regional Cultural Consortia are now developing Regional Cultural Observatories as depositories for regional based information and knowledge to support improvement.

Over the next 12 months it is intended to migrate Cultural Connections into a single cultural and sport site on IDeA Knowledge with links to the regional Cultural Observatories. Together the network will provide councils with a range of national and regional advice and guidance, and examples of good practice. IDeA will also support Communities of Practice where they are appropriate and sustainable. Communities of Practice provide a virtual opportunity for individuals in different councils and organisations to communicate and learn from each other. IDeA will also provide support to develop better mutual learning for both members and managers.

Regional Improvement Networks will also provide opportunities for shared learning supported by Non-Departmental Public Bodies and professional bodies.

Box 2.12: Cultural Observatories

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and all the main culture and sport agencies have information and knowledge to support improvement on their websites, as do many of the professional bodies. The Regional Cultural Consortia are also developing Cultural Observatories with information to support advocacy and improvement:

- North East: www.neeco.org.uk
- South East: www.seco.org.uk
- North West: www.northwestcultureobservatory.co.uk
- Yorkshire: www.yco.org.uk
- East Midlands: www.emculturalobservatory.co.uk
- West Midlands: www.wmro.org
- South West: www.swo.org.uk
- East of England: www.eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk

At present information is available on:

- Cultural Connections and IDeA Knowledge: www.idea.gov.uk
- Local Government Association (LGA): www.lga.gov.uk

E. Improving leadership and workforce development

The culture and sport sector has, like other sectors, been developing a more strategic and consistent approach to raising competency standards through the Learning Skills Council and professional bodies. Workforce development is critical for the sector and additional effort will be required to ensure staff have and retain the right skills to meet the requirements of modern public service delivery.

More councils are choosing to externalise service delivery to private sector providers, trusts and third sector partners. For improvement to be consistent, organisations representing these sectors will need to be engaged as key partners in continual professional development.

Training and development in the sector is often customised and carried out in a specific professional or service focus. This has many benefits but limits the capacity to share learning across boundaries and build more capable management capacity in line with modern organisational requirements. More ambitious and co-ordinated approaches to training and development are required if the sector is to meet the new challenges.

Box 2.13: Skills resources

- SkillsActive is part of the Sector Skills Development Agency and is responsible for active leisure and learning covering sport and recreation, health and fitness, play, work and the outdoors. Information about its work including occupational standards is available on: www.skillsactive.com
- This also includes the recently announced National Skills Academy for Active Leisure and Learning which will be established in 2008
- The Creative and Cultural Skills Council is responsible for the arts, cultural heritage, craft and design: www.ccskills.org.uk
- Lifelong Learning UK is responsible for libraries: www.lifelonglearninguk.org

Leadership development is a specific need in the sector, both for elected members and staff. Although attempts have been made to improve leadership, including the Treasury funded Cultural Leadership Programme, progress is still slow.

As leaders in the sector, existing and future senior managers will increasingly need to recognise the requirement to move beyond their professional service competencies. They will need to attain levels of awareness and understanding that enable them to properly position culture and sport where it can contribute to shared outcomes and make an impact. Access to national leadership programmes where they can engage with other service leaders will be essential to their development.

The changing shape and size of the sector in local government, in particular, means it is becoming harder for managers to progress to senior positions where they can influence and advocate for the sector. The growing diversity in providers of service adds further to the complexity and challenges if people are to progress. There is now an opportunity to provide greater clarity over who is responsible for developing better leadership skills across the sector.

Box 2.14: Cultural leadership programme

Cultural Leadership Programme

The programme seeks to embed a culture of support and development for leaders in the sector, building on existing practice, addressing current gaps in provision, learning lessons from other sectors and countries, and ensuring that this initial investment delivers a sound basis for long-term change in business leadership skills development.

Diversity in leadership Through the programme, they seek to make significant progress in enhancing the diversity of current and future leaders, with a particular focus on leaders from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

To deliver these aims the Cultural Leadership Programme targets three areas of leadership development:

Current leaders The programme supports the development of existing cultural leaders, ensuring they have the skills to achieve maximum impact for themselves and their organisations

Future and emerging leaders The programme promotes the development of future leaders so that they can augment existing creative ability with business and entrepreneurial skills

Boards and trustees as cultural leaders The programme will improve the development and training of board members and trustees of cultural and creative organisations enabling them to provide the governance, leadership and advice necessary to meet the challenges that organisations will face:
www.culturalleadership.org.uk

The Culture Forum has recently received funding from the programme to support leadership development in the local government sector. Details will be available shortly on the CLOA web site: www.cloa.org.uk

The **National Cultural Forum** and associated professional bodies will take responsibility for better co-ordinating leadership and workforce development across the sector as part of the improvement strategy.

Member development is equally a key issue for the sector, particularly if there is to be stronger leadership and championing of the role of culture and sport in the “place shaping agenda”. Various member development and leadership programmes have been piloted using learning and expertise from other IDeA member development programmes and these will now be available to the Regional Improvement Networks.

Box 2.15: Leadership programme at IDeA

Leadership programmes for culture and sport lead members and officers have been piloted in a number of regions as part of the pilot improvement programme.

In Yorkshire and Humber a member development programme has worked with a number of elected members, supporting them in their roles. In the East Midlands sub-regional workshops for members have helped them consider how the sector can be better positioned to meet local authority priorities. Both the South East and the South West pilots have looked to build capacity through developing cultural champions. In London the focus has been on building leadership capacity through a series of officer master classes.

Information about the IDeA leadership programmes can be found on IDeA Knowledge: www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=1589608



3. Delivering the strategy – roles and responsibilities

The strategy seeks to simplify the current improvement architecture across the culture and sport sector by:

- clarifying respective roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders involved
- facilitating greater collaboration between these stakeholders at the local, regional and national levels.

Within the context of the national improvement and efficiency strategy **councils and their partners, including Local Strategic Partnerships** will drive and deliver improvement at the local level and have responsibility for identifying local improvement priorities, securing continuous improvements in performance, and achieving relevant LAA and efficiency targets.

Specifically, those responsible for culture and sport will ensure that the sector:

- contributes to achieving agreed outcomes
- meets locally agreed improvement targets
- achieves continuous self improvement.

To support them professional bodies with a responsibility for culture and sport will separately and as part of the **National Culture Forum**:

- demonstrate leadership and advocacy on behalf of the sector nationally, regionally and locally to other professional bodies outside the sector
- co-ordinate workforce development particularly leadership development through sector wide competencies and standards, CPD schemes, and training and development designed to ensure that people working in the sector can perform to the highest possible standards
- act as the client body for all improvement tools and processes, ensuring there is adequate peer support to sustain sector led improvement
- support regional and local improvement partnerships and networks to help sustain sector led improvement
- support the development of and promotion of co-ordinated facility and service accreditation schemes including Quest, Green Flag, and Museum and Archives accreditation, and promote minimum service standards where formal accreditation does not yet exist
- communicate effectively to their members to keep them informed about appropriate developments relating to improving culture and sport.

The **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** will demonstrate national leadership and work with **Non-Departmental Public Bodies** to encourage delivery partners to engage proactively with councils on the wider improvement agenda. It will advocate, champion and promote improvement across culture and sport by:

- identifying national priority outcomes for culture and sport and the links to wider government agendas
- working with central government partners to influence national performance indicators
- clarifying and disseminating key messages about how culture and sport can contribute to place shaping in local areas
- supporting regional partners to work in a collaborative way with councils to ensure joined up support and delivery

- working with regional partners to identify local areas where engagement with councils and Local Strategic Partnerships is a priority.

It will be the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's policy to delegate as much decision making as possible down to the regional level. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will support its representatives in the Government Offices in:

- working with regional partners and councils to identify priority areas where the achievement of agreed outcomes would be especially significant to the delivery of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's aims
- influencing the negotiation and delivery of LAA improvement targets and agreeing additional support if necessary
- ensuring that improvement action and support from regional agencies is available to councils and other stakeholders, is co-ordinated with Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, and consistent with regional improvement and efficiency strategies.

Non-Departmental Public Bodies will nationally and regionally support the delivery of local outcomes by:

- working in partnership with councils and Local Strategic Partnerships to promote and support local improvement
- working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Government Offices and other regional partners to support the development and delivery of Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs
- working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Government Offices, and other regional delivery partners to provide capacity building support to councils and Local Strategic Partnerships through the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships aligned with the regional strategies, and support the delivery of LAA and MAA improvement targets
- demonstrating national and regional leadership through joint support for the development and maintenance of cross cutting improvement tools, promoting improvement initiatives, sharing best practice
- supporting the Audit Commission's role in monitoring performance through the Comprehensive Area Assessment and supporting the sector in an ambition for higher standards of service to the public.

Regional Cultural Consortia may have a role in working strategically with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to broker connections between culture and sport and other local partners on matters related to LAAs and improvement activity. However, the scope for Regional Cultural Consortia to contribute will vary across the English regions depending on:

- the capacity of each Regional Cultural Consortium to commit resources to this work
- the extent to which improvement activity and networking is already under way in the region
- discussions with Non-Departmental Public Bodies on what role, if any, it would be appropriate for the Regional Cultural Consortium to perform in the region.

Given that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport regional review and separate reviews of some Non-Departmental Public Bodies have yet to be completed, the application of the above roles and responsibilities will be developed further in the

subsequent action plan along with the allocation of available resources to support the implementation of the strategy.

The Local Government Association will:

- work closely with the central bodies to strengthen the sense of a single collaborative venture working on behalf of councils
- ensure that the local government family works to a single shared strategy and direction agreed by the Local Government Association Executive in consultation with the boards of the central bodies and others.

IDeA will encourage and support improvement by:

- connecting ideas and expertise, both within the sector and beyond, to cross fertilise solutions and accelerate progress
- focusing on best practice and forward thinking, enabling individual councils and local government to learn systematically and respond to the needs of changing environments
- delivering a flexible range of tools and services, carrying risk on behalf of local government by innovating and incubating new joined up but locally delivered initiatives
- supporting leadership development and awareness through its leadership programmes.

Audit Commission and Comprehensive Area Assessment

The Audit Commission is responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. As an independent watchdog, it provides important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement the Commission provides practical recommendations and spreads best practice.

From 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will replace CPA to provide a holistic independent assessment of the prospects for local areas and the quality of life for people living there. It will put the experience of citizens, people who use services and local taxpayers at the centre of the new local assessment framework, with a particular focus on those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

CAA will recognise:

- the importance of effective local partnership working
- the enhanced role of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and local area agreements and
- the importance of councils in leading and shaping the communities they serve.

CAA will be delivered jointly by all the inspectorates, and will be tailored to the priorities for each area, focusing on those outcomes most in need of improvement. Joint working between inspectorates will mean that CSCI, the Healthcare Commission (and their successor) and Ofsted in particular will be more visible in discussions about areas.

Each area will identify its own improvement issues, but the key issues regulators are likely to ask are whether the authority is:

- maximising the impact of cultural investment on national and local objectives
- delivering better value for money and greater efficiency
- maintaining and accelerating continual improvement through faster dissemination of good practice and innovation so that cultural services are able to respond better to the changing needs of diverse communities and provide fair access to all
- achieving consistently high standards of governance and accountability especially in partnerships and complex delivery arrangements
- significantly improving the quality and availability of data and making better use of it to support decision making and improvement.

The Audit Commission's role in supporting improvement will be aligned with the new performance framework, and will include:

- a new more proportionate and tailored approach to inspection that recognises the unique challenges of local areas and their varying capacity for improvement
- a role in providing challenge and assurance on local delivery, working with local partnerships to identify risk, spot adverse trends and identify and promote best practice
- working closely with Government Offices and Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships to identify places where the achievement of agreed outcomes is at risk or there is serious risk of failure arising
- working with other local service inspectorates, RIEPs and GOs to ensure that support for improvement and responses to poor performance are co-ordinated and tailored to the nature and severity of the problem and draw on a clear analysis of problems and best practice.

Future governance arrangements for the improvement strategy

To date the cultural services improvement project has been managed by a project board made up of the main funding partners with a separate sounding board made up of other stakeholders and council representatives. The Cultural Services Improvement Unit based within IDeA has provided additional capacity and has enabled the sector to address some of its weakness in the area of improvement. This strategy marks the end of this development phase. If it is to succeed, the strategy will continue to need appropriate management and governance arrangements to ensure it is managed, delivered, monitored and continually updated and revised.

The relative balance between central and local government-led improvement has changed with local government now taking responsibility for its own improvement. The governance arrangements for the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy reflect this with Local Government Association Boards taking far greater responsibility nationally.

Future governance arrangements for the culture and sport strategy will need to reflect this new balance with local government playing a far greater role in leading the strategy with the support of Non-Departmental Public Bodies and central government.

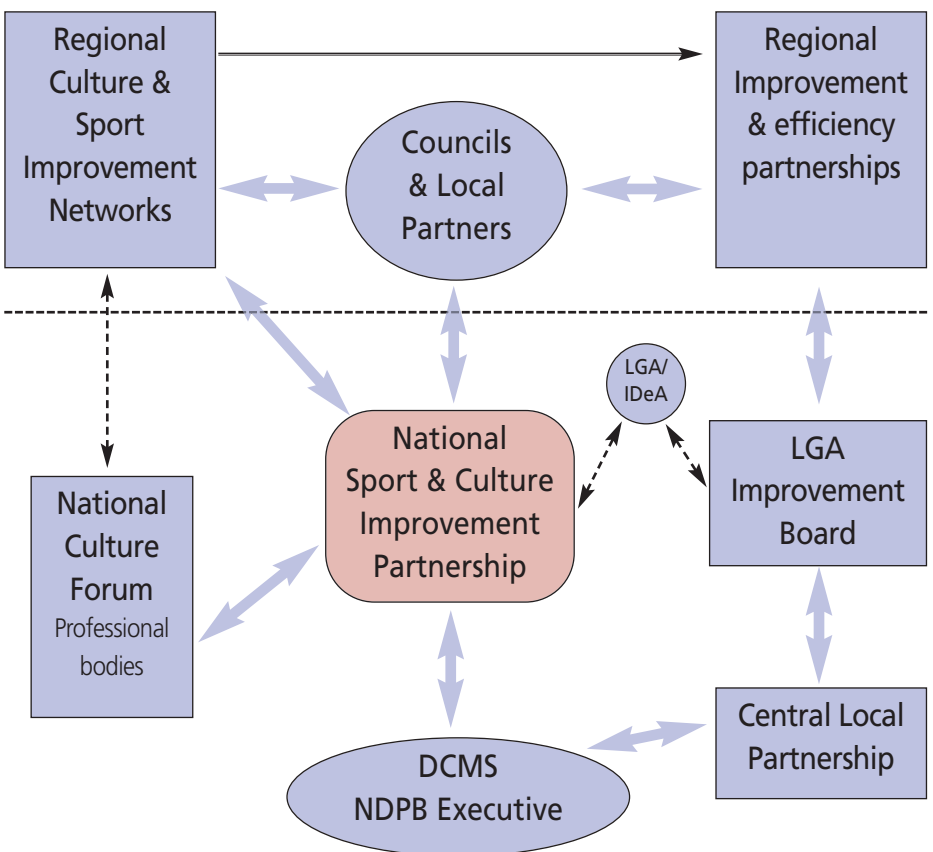
However experience has shown that limited capacity within local government and

organisations such as CLOA and the other professional bodies limits the ability to maintain a significant involvement on a continuous basis. The new arrangements will need to be realistic about capacity available, given demands now being placed on individuals at the regional and local levels as well as the demand for more national leadership. It will be necessary to provide resources to help build capacity where this is required.

It is recommended that at the national level a **National Culture and Sport Improvement Network** be created by rationalising current consultative and management arrangements. The following diagram sets out a future structure for the management arrangements for delivering the strategy and sustaining self-improvement across the sector.

Diagram B: Culture and sport improvement governance arrangements

Culture and sport Improvement Strategy – Future governance arrangements



Making it happen

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, with the Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other stakeholders, will now develop an integrated action plan to implement this national strategy. This will ensure that commitments and agreed roles and responsibilities are embedded in their national and regional business plans. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will embed these in future funding agreements.

Whatever the final arrangements that emerge it is clear that implementation of this strategy relies on:

- the clear detailed action plan to identify timescales, priorities, responsible persons, reporting lines and management arrangements
- corporate and operational commitment to the improvement agenda by all the key stakeholders
- clear and sustained “enabling” leadership at all levels
- a clear responsibility for holding the ring and ensuring action happens
- the availability of resources to support delivery.

Box 3.1: Ten ‘to do’ list

Ten things you and your council can do to deliver the strategy and improve culture and sport services:

- 1 show how culture and sport can contribute to delivering your sustainable community strategy by examining the evidence from other places and making the case in your council
- 2 show how culture and sport can help deliver your LAA improvement targets
- 3 if increasing participation in culture and sport would help you improve outcomes for your communities include one of the participation indicators as an improvement target in your LAA
- 4 invite representatives from the culture and sport sector onto your Local Strategic Partnerships and its thematic partnerships
- 5 commit to using the new culture and sport improvement toolkit to self-assess your organisation and use it to define your improvement priorities
- 6 consider using one of the external challenge processes to help you improve
- 7 get involved in the development and delivery of culture and sport strategic reviews
- 8 help support the development of your culture and sport regional improvement network
- 9 identify what you are good at and share it with others. Take the opportunity to learn from your colleagues
- 10 offer to become a peer or support your professional body in making their contribution to delivering the strategy.



4. Measuring the success of the strategy

The overall effectiveness of the strategy will ultimately be judged nationally against the sector's achievements in increasing and sustaining participation in culture and sport as measured by the National Indicators. Locally it will be judged in terms of achieving better outcomes for local people and communities as measured by the LAA improvement targets where these exist.

However along the way the success of the strategy can also be measured and judged by the take-up of a range of voluntary activities including:

- the number of Local Strategic Partnerships which recognise culture and sport in their Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs and the achievement of improvement targets where these are set
- the number of councils and other organisations using self-assessment and external challenge
- the level of participation in and effectiveness of regional improvement networks
- the growth in access to knowledge and shared learning as measured by use of IDEA Knowledge and Regional Observatories
- the increased availability of a national library of evidence demonstrating the impact of the sector
- the number of services and facilities achieving, maintaining and improving in recognised accreditation schemes
- the extent, effectiveness and impact of joint working and collaboration by Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other agencies on improvement work.

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Appendix – National performance indicators directly relating to culture and sport for use in LAAs

<p>NI 8</p>	<p>Adult participation in sport and active recreation</p> <p>The percentage of the adult population in a local area who participate in sport and active recreation, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days out of the last 4 weeks (equivalent to 30 minutes on 3 or more days a week).</p>	<p>Adults: 16 years and above</p> <p>Sport and active recreation are the sport and recreation activities as measured in the Active People Survey (including for example recreational walking and recreational cycling). A technical note to this indicator is available on the DCMS and Sport England websites.</p> <p>Moderate intensity: this includes 'brisk' walking, those activities that 'raise the breathing rate' and some lighter intensity activities for those aged 65 years and over - yoga; pilates; indoor and outdoor bowls; archery and croquet.</p>
<p>NI 9</p>	<p>Use of public libraries</p> <p>The percentage of the adult population in a local area who say they have used a public library service at least once in the last 12 months.</p>	<p>Adults: 16 years and above</p> <p>Use of a public library service: Means use, in any of a variety of ways, of a public library service at least once in the last 12 months. The respondent will be asked a question that will give examples of how a public library service can be used, and the interviewer will have a more detailed list (below) to which they can refer for prompting or guidance. Note – usage will only be included if it is done during spare/leisure time, and not as part of full-time work, formal education or formal volunteering. Use of a public library can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a visit to a public library building or mobile library to make use of library services (including to print/use electronic resources or to take part in an event such as a reading group or author visit) • the use of on-line library resources or services remotely (i.e. used a computer outside the library to view the website, catalogue or databases) • access, and receipt, of the library service by email, telephone, fax or letter • receipt of an outreach service such as home delivery or library events outside a library building • use of other libraries and archives services is excluded.

<p>NI 10</p>	<p>Visits to museums and galleries</p> <p>The percentage of the adult population in a local area who say they have attended a museum or gallery at least once in the last 12 months.</p>	<p>Adults: 16 years and above</p> <p>Attendance: Means a trip to any museum or gallery at least once in the last 12 months. Online access to collections and outreach services will not be counted.</p> <p>Note – attendance will only be included if done during spare/leisure time, and not as part of full-time work, formal education or formal volunteering.</p> <p>Museums and galleries: The survey question asked may give examples, but on the whole this will be left for the respondent to define.</p>
<p>N 11</p>	<p>Engagement in the arts</p> <p>The percentage of the adult population in a local area that have engaged in the arts at least three times in the past 12 months.</p>	<p>Adults: 16 years and above</p> <p>Engagement: Either attend an arts event or participate in arts activity at least three times in the past 12 months. All arts activities and events are included, not just those funded by local authorities.</p> <p>Artistic activity and events: Whether an activity or event qualifies as “attending or participating in the arts” is ultimately for the survey respondent to decide. However, the question they are asked will give examples of types of activities and events that could be included, and the interviewer will have a list of activities and events to which they can refer for prompting or guidance. Guidance on what activities and events could be included will be available on the DCMS website.</p>

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