

Accessing Funds to Support the Local Delivery of Culture and Sport Monday, 4 July 2011

**Bridewell Hall, St Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 8EQ
9.30 am – 4.30 pm**

Summary of the discussion notes:

The priorities that participants preferred were:

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| Philanthropy | 20 |
| Commissioning | 16 |
| Collaborative working | 15 |
| Commercialisation | 15 |
| Consortia | 11 |
| Co-location | 6 |
| Outsourcing | 5 |
| Volunteering | 5 |
| Asset transfer | 3 |

The general points discussed were that:

- The cultural sector has a long history of being under pressure and adapting to change. It is probably more advanced than many other local government sectors. However, it is in a vulnerable position because of its non-statutory and discretionary status. Co-location, joint working, consortia and outsourcing require considerable political will and Members will need to make a firm commitment to the cultural sector if there is to be any impact. To implement many of the options local authorities need to let go of their traditional control of services
- All boroughs are in a different position and place in their development of responses to spending cuts. For example, many authorities are already moving towards commissioning. However, there is an opportunity to share lessons and ideas. There are no real quick wins but there are some actions that can be implemented immediately and others that have a much longer lead in.
- There is much work to do in building capacity, particularly in the community and voluntary sector. Boroughs need to build on existing volunteers, for example

'friends' groups. Also Boroughs should take advantage of the Olympic volunteer network.

- New skills are needed to enable local authority officers to develop new approaches to generating funds.
- Areas such as community development and philanthropy need considerable time and effort to implement. Whatever options are chosen boroughs need to take time and judge the pace they are able to travel.
- The cultural sector needs to build stronger partnerships with other sectors (particularly health and education) and to make itself indispensable. More time needs to be created for discussions with the private sector and negotiating with other sectors about commissioning.
- Developing philanthropy was the most popular option for development but authorities have some concerns. Firstly, some boroughs in poorer areas are concerned that local philanthropy may not be possible. Secondly, as the search for philanthropic funding is highly competitive, there needs to be a national policy framework to support local authorities. Thirdly, better use needs to be made of Councillors and their personal networks.
- Many participants thought that a further to their services is a possible 'quick win', including private sector investment opportunities (especially investment in assets). A move towards commercialisation could be a solution for merchandising and the operation of small theatres and other facilities that are not currently cost effective. Commercialisation will need a better understanding of customer need and a greater acceptance of risk.
- Conversely, the general view was that outsourcing has been considered to be a quick solution but it needs a lot more time and analysis to find the right option.
- Participants were concerned how support could be given in the absence of the LCIP, when officers do not have the time to meet? Could CLOA take on a role or should Boroughs drive their own networks possibly on a sub regional basis?
- Despite its popularity with local people culture and sport is not a power block and still has difficulty advocating the value and wide-ranging impact of its services