

London CLOA meeting – Culture and Sport Theme

Wednesday 27 January, 15.30 – 17:00

Apologies: Andy Dalby-Welsh (LYG), Coreen Brown (LB Westminster), Mark Cook (Sport England), Vince Donaldson (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority), Claire Powell (LB Hounslow), Sue Harris (LB RBKC), Tim Clee (LB Tower Hamlets), Ian Ross (LB Lambeth), Peter Freeman (Enable Leisure & Culture), Francis McParland (Merton).

1. Welcome and introductions - Ishbel Murray, Chair, London CLOA

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and sent best wishes to Andy Dalby-Welsh on behalf of CLOA members following his last-minute absence due to ill health.

2. Centre for Cultural Value presentation – Anne Torregiani, Co-Director of the Centre for Cultural Value (CCV)

Anne Torregiani delivered a presentation about the CCV. She is CEO and director of the Audience Agency as well as CCV, which enables her to have a foothold in both academia and the sector. They have 33 sector affiliate partners, including CLOA. Affiliate partners help to reach networks, deliver projects, and promote an evidence-based approach to policy and practise. The CCV focuses on understanding the difference culture makes in people's lives. They avoid definitions and want to articulate the many forms of value that culture brings to society. Although CCV is based within Leeds University, it is partnered with Queen Margaret, Sheffield, and Liverpool Universities as well as the Audience Agency. They are funded by the Arts Councils, Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

CCV reviews and summarises existing research to provide wider access to cultural knowledge in academia, enable a greater understanding of such research, and facilitate their wider application. They have four core themes that they will focus their research upon:

1. The role of arts, culture, heritage, and screen in the context of Covid
2. Culture, health, and wellbeing
3. Cultural participation
4. Community, place, and identity.

In 2022, their research is focused upon cultural participation. Their process is to consult practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to inform their research reviews, share knowledge, and interpret the results, and they advertise these opportunities through their communication channels. They provide support to develop evaluation skills for cultural projects, and campaign to work together for the sake of evaluation, learning improvement, and greater impact rather than box-ticking. They have developed a set of evaluation principles as a framework to enable conversations about what good evaluation looks like. For instance, conversations with funders are needed to facilitate their input into achieving better evaluations. Their principles are composed of four key qualities:

1. Beneficial

2. Robust
3. People-centred
4. Connected

They intend to deliver seminars in practice, debate, policy roundtables, and Massively Open Online Courses (MOOC). They have increased their policy work, looking at methodology, creating more relevant research digests, and identifying crucial policy gaps. They provide small pots of funding for exemplary evaluation projects to enable better collaboration between the sector and academia. Additionally, they undertake several research partnerships, such as their recent Covid-19 impact study which will be released in due course, that enabled information to flow to policymakers and researchers about the real-time impact of the pandemic in the cultural sector. Anne ended her presentation by encouraging CLOA members to utilise the CCV's resources, contribute when opportunities arise, and to contact them for any queries.

The chair thanked Anne for her presentation, and noted that CCV's evaluation resources could be beneficial for boroughs to effectively evaluate projects. London CLOA routinely seeks subgroups to spark discussions on relevant topics, and evaluations are one of them.

3. London Youth Games presentation – Stuart Burnside, Interim Chair of LYG, and John Burton, Head of Operations and Events

Stuart Burnside delivered a presentation focused on the strategic aspects of LYG's consultation and future direction. Due to the pandemic, LYG has undergone a pause and shutdown of event delivery to reflect upon whether they are fit for purpose. Financial pressures have forced value to be demonstrated and the identification of different types of value. A concern is that while their consultation will produce different views, there will be a temptation to maintain the status quo while tinkering around the edges for fear of upsetting others. Stuart wishes to meaningfully change the way LYG works to protect popular activities, deliver useful activities more efficiently, and more closely match borough needs. These changes may take several years to implement.

The 'high-performance' sport category should be retained because although it won't address health outcomes, it allows disadvantaged communities to be reached, provides opportunities to develop life skills and meaningfully attain something, produce positive role models for kids and thus serve as inspiration for them. Similarly, the 'Inspire' category should also be retained as competition can motivate those who struggle at sports, which produces positive health outcomes. It could include more sports than those that are part of the core sports offer, which could enable conversations with local clubs to take part and source more volunteers for those events. However, competition can demotivate some children if executed poorly. Consequently, competitions should be tiered based upon ability, which is reflected by the 'Aspire' category. Having more tiers creates the opportunity for more appropriate competition.

LYG are intending to trial a local hub model of delivery involving fewer London boroughs to create more depth and less breadth. A consistent quality level of facilities would enable twice as many teams to be accommodated. Councils would benefit through increased

efficiencies as local hubs would result in less time spent on transportation and general administration. It could enable commercial opportunities, such as catering, which would save boroughs money. This could facilitate the creation of more flexible and local events, such as utilising an unused swimming pool. Additionally, boroughs could use protected hours or contribute facilities rather than money to pay LYG as value-in-kind. Stuart ended his presentation by stating that LYG plan to consult further on their plans with boroughs.

The chair thanked Stuart for his presentation, and asked a question about the timeline of the consultation. Stuart replied that LYG would work backwards from the estimated implementation date, which could be 2024 depending on the boroughs and the extent of communications back-and-forth. They could make tactical interventions in the interim and partner with boroughs to find ways to make budget savings. A one-size-fits-all solution for London is not what they seek, but they want to work with boroughs to identify event and sports club suitability.

The chair posed a further question about whether their new approach would be more expensive. Stuart replied that it wouldn't be more expensive for boroughs, but if it transpired that that was the case, it would be funded elsewhere. It ultimately depends on what boroughs want. If a borough has plentiful resources and want to have the best event in their best venue, they can deliver that. What LYG is focusing on is making their delivery more efficient and reducing costs.

John Burton provided a further presentation focused on LYG operational matters. LYG is looking to create an advisory group with an independent chair, CLOA representation, eight borough team organisers, and representatives from London Sport. LYG is therefore looking for a representative from CLOA. LYG ran some regional hubs in 2021, which were highly successful with respect to teams and sports engagement, and thus serve as their future blueprint. They are not planning on returning to their Crystal Palace venue, so LYG are looking for a new permanent venue. They want to work further with boroughs to decide what the regional hubs would look like, move away from just delivering sport for sporty children and tackle health inequalities using evidence-based delivery.

The chair thanked both John and Stuart for their presentations and noted that CLOA will continue to discuss LYG and its work in the future. A question was raised about whether LYG wanted a mix of seniority for their borough team organisers or whether they only want strategically focused representatives with financial mindsets. Stuart noted the question and said that LYG will think carefully about how to respond to that challenge.

4. Updates from attendees on latest cultural developments

The chair invited attendees to update members on the latest cultural developments in their localities. Merton has had a large amount of interest in its parks for events, such as musical events, food events, and so on. The chair noted this, and suggested that it may be useful to have a future agenda item on community events. Access issues to parks such as fences were also raised.

ACTION: Agenda item to be added for a future CLOA meeting on community events

5. AOB

The chair announced that the CLOA AGM and members conference would be held virtually on the 22nd of June, which will focus thematically on disability and access, share case studies and opportunities, and spread the work across the cultural portfolio. Dates for future CLOA meetings will be shared in due course, and the chair encouraged members to share any agenda items they would like to be discussed in future meetings.