

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Thursday 30 January 2025</b>
<b>Place:</b>	Via Teams
<b>Times:</b>	<b>0930 – 1300</b>
<b>Participants:</b>	CLOA Executive – Bobsie Robinson, Caroline O’ Neill, Debbie Kaye, Donna Pentelow, Hagan Lewisman, Iain Varah, Ian Jones, Jon Finch, Jonathan Cochrane, Julie Russell, Mark Allman, Matt Partridge, Paula Redway, Penny Greenwood-Parsons, Robert Campbell, Thorsten Dreyer, Vincent Paliczka, Val Birchall, Zsuzsi Lindsay CLOA Business Manager – Heidi Bellamy LGA Observer – Ian Leete
<b>Apologies:</b>	CLOA Executive – Nigel Lynn, Ullash Karia

	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Relevant business considered, facts noted, decisions taken and actions agreed</b>
1	Minutes & matters arising	The minutes of the meeting <a href="#">26 September 2024</a> were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate record. Matters Arising – Nigel Lynn and Matt Partridge are retiring from their local authority roles. JR expressed - thanks for all the work they have done to connect CLOA with national bodies and act in advocacy at CEX level. Other Executive members recorded thanks in the Chat. Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager, Oxford City Council was co-opted onto the Executive Committee – proposed by JR and seconded by PR
2	Current financial challenges - discussion	This item was proposed and discussion led by DP DP – prior to the meeting had scanned press reports around savings targets and shared intel around budget setting nationally. LGA have a section 114 group and DP asked whether this is open to those on the edge, so planning into the next financial years 26/27. IL – confirmed that support for councils on the verge of section 114 is available, but this is less for service specific areas. LGA is doing a survey ahead of the spending review that will inform local government finance conversations. The implications for NI increase are also a consideration

		<p>and IL is feeding information into DCMS. Sheila Bennett at DCMS is providing challenge back to authorities considering library cuts.</p> <p>JR – mentioned that in response to the challenge of NI contributions, Manchester have moved their arrangements to an agency model, which is helping to mitigate the issue.</p> <p>IV – advised that the agency model is also being pushed by GLL, and recoverable VAT is another route.</p> <p><b>Action - IV to connect with John Oxley to understand further and share any additional advice available from APSE and CLUK with the Executive.</b></p> <p>DP – raised the political challenge of members divesting theatres and moving into alternative delivery models.</p> <p>JR – suggested that given there have been changes in benefits to different models, across the arts, culture and wider leisure sector; it may be beneficial to convene a roundtable or partner with LGA and others, on pros and cons/examples of success. By example, the Theatres Trust may well be able to share approaches; equally CLUK could be asked to present a range of options for Trust models.</p> <p><b>Action – HB to identify resources to share with members, and all to consider this as a topic for a roundtable event for CLOA to host.</b></p>
3	English Devolution_– what does this mean for our sectors	<p>The Executive had an open discussion about the implications following on from the <a href="#">English Devolution White Paper</a></p> <p>JF – gave a short presentation that gave an overview of the current state of play with regards to devolution, and what this might mean for our sectors.</p> <p><b>Action – HB to circulate the presentation with the minutes.</b></p> <p>VB – shared the notes from a meeting with Arts Council England and LGA.</p> <p>MP – is involved in lots of local conversations. Hard not to conflate devolution with LGR, which is arising from the need to drive efficiencies. As devolution deals get developed, CLOA members will need to look for opportunities to embed discretionary services.</p> <p>IL – gave an overview of the thinking arising from LGA and suggested Executive members take a look at <a href="#">The devolution and LG reorganisation hub</a>, which is bringing together information for local authorities. He added there might be an increase in place-based investment away from thematic investment. LGA will facilitate conversations and share learning, but hasn't committed to outright support; Councillor Liz Green Chair of CTS Board gave an interview on the potential impact on discretionary services. There is a concern that resourcing may not be available, and assets that need maintenance or rationalisation might be susceptible to a 'fire sale'. LGA is in contact with Secretary of State on this issue of concern.</p> <p>DP – felt that there was a need for leadership support around this topic.</p>

		<p>HB – raised the issue of membership attrition as a possibility as devolution/reorganisation progresses. There has been a move towards Corporate membership in recent years and the Executive will need to consider how the association might evolve to represent a changing landscape, as the number of combined authorities increases.</p> <p>VP – was hopeful that new bodies would still see the value and there is an opportunity to market to these new bodies.</p> <p>JR – suggested that we approach Mayoral authorities and invite them to take up membership.</p> <p>DK – flagged up that rural versus urban areas has led to a differing political perspective.</p> <p>TD – suggested some initial financial modelling to understand the impact and to quantify the risk.</p> <p><b>Action – HB to liaise with TD and VP on how this might best be achieved using the existing data map and membership information.</b></p> <p>N.B Later in the meeting it was decided to include this exercise as part of the start and finish group work looking at membership fees.</p>
4	Active Wellbeing Leadership Network	<p>JR – reflected on the journey of this collaborative group that started working together in May 2024. The aim was to challenge the way we’ve always worked, as it is clear that inequalities have widened. The Active Wellbeing Leadership Network welcomes new perspectives; keeps the boundaries to the system wide: in order to attract and be open to new voices and perspectives. The updates previously showcase a journey to date: including a personal reflective piece from the Chair. The last session started to look in more detail at some emerging themes, enabling richer conversations of the ‘What’ and How’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an active environment</li> <li>• Community empowerment</li> <li>• Health and health pathways</li> </ul> <p>There are further themes that the network will consider, such as how to bring together the Skills and Leadership to navigate the new challenge. The next step will likely include some advocacy information for government and wider influencers and decision makers.</p> <p>IJ – gave an update on the four Sports Partnerships in Wales (linked to active well-being work) collaborating across key agencies and funding bodies to deliver more outcomes with same resource, leveraging more value and impact. All partnerships now have appointed a Board, Chair and a Regional Director</p>
5	Budget Update	<p>A financial update was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>VP - talked through the budget variables and highlighted that a higher than predicted surplus is projected at the end of the financial year, due to securing Playfootball as an additional Principle Sponsor.</p>
	Membership fees	<p>An increase of £10 for Individuals and a £30 for a Corporate subscription took effect from April 23.</p>

	Freezing membership policy	<p>VP - Suggested no further increase is proposed for June 25.</p> <p>CON – advised that Welsh membership is low and so a major increase in fees will be a further disincentive.</p> <p>IJ – felt that people attend Chief Leisure Officers Wales (CLOW) and feel that they get sufficient information and connection from these meetings.</p> <p>JR – felt that membership categories ought to reflect the landscape, so potentially a new category for Mayoral Combined Authorities should be introduced at a higher level.</p> <p><b>Action – a task and finish group led by VP and supported by HB will convene to consider membership price and future structure. VB, DP, PR, TD, IV, DK, CON and IJ to be invited to attend</b></p> <p>The next phase of LG review is at least a year away and the review will need to capture existing members' views of value.</p> <p>In terms of due process, any changes will need to be first agreed by the Executive and then brought forward for ratification at the following AGM.</p> <p>Additionally, the CLOA Finance Manager Anelli Bryant has alerted VP to an ongoing problem with late renewals and suggested proposing a deadline for renewals – for example if there is no response or a pending PO, to freeze the membership from June.</p> <p>Currently there is 1 corporate and 3 individuals that have not yet been invoiced for April 2024 – March 2025; in the meantime they are still receiving ebulletins and therefore if they then decide to cancel will have had free membership for nearly a year.</p> <p>DK – suggested passing on a note to chief financial officer.</p> <p>IV – suggested a debt collection agency and also suggested we compare the current fee to other membership bodies and increase again at the June AGM.</p> <p>VP – felt that first a message should be sent from the Treasurer and then another from the Chair.</p> <p><b>Action – HB &amp; AB to liaise with VP to agree a form of wording for a formal freezing of membership.</b></p>
6	Presentation from Playfootball	<p>Steve Bennett, Chief Commercial Officer at Playfootball was invited to present at this meeting. Our newest Principal sponsor, who came onboard on 1<sup>st</sup> September, are a specialist recreational football company providing a complete solution for all-weather sports pitch owners.</p> <p>IV – testified as to the beneficial impact Playfootball is having on revenue and engagement at Vision Redbridge sites.</p> <p><b>Action – HB to share the <a href="#">recording of this presentation</a> with the membership.</b></p> <p><b>Action – HB to send Steve Bennett the other questions from the Executive and circulate the answers.</b></p>

		<b>Action – All to share the presentation with relevant colleagues in their organisation.</b>
7	Culture sub-group update	<p>VB – gave an update on this group, which meets regularly with good attendance.</p> <p>A meeting with London cultural leaders’ sub-group has been scheduled – 16 people have signed up, London Councils are attending to brief on devolution/LGR issues in London (may be some mergers, changes to Borough’s roles in Mayoral decisions). There is also the potential to recruit new members and HB has advised on which attendees are not in membership and provided wording for a 3-month free trial.</p> <p>The recent National Cultural Alliance meeting was very well attended with reps from Combined Authorities and the other partners.</p> <p>The takeaways were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How best to identify distinct roles at the different tiers and to align strategies across the system nationally, regionally and locally</li> <li>• How to maintain local identity and reduce the distance between residents and decisions</li> <li>• How to reduce the cost of the changes and protect cultural investment, including how funding flows through the system</li> <li>• How to learn lessons from the past and share good practice as to what works</li> </ul> <p>The issues surrounding locally stewarded collections (art, museums, archives, local records), the skills needed and how to work best as a team were also discussed.</p> <p>It was agreed to set up a task &amp; finish group to explore how to build a model for local, regional, sub-regional and national strategies, resources, skills, partnerships etc could fit together to deliver better outcomes.</p> <p>At future meetings topics will be Archives, Creative &amp; Cultural Industries, continuing Combined Authority group on devolution.</p> <p>Other work has included: -</p> <p>Libraries – English Public Libraries group (convened by ACE) does not currently include CLOA, as such there is ongoing dialogue with Libraries Connected.</p> <p><b>Action – JR to contact ACE regarding this issue.</b></p> <p>No response has yet been received to the collaborative ministerial submission on Libraries.</p> <p>Data – TD gave an update on productive work with the national strategic data project alignment group, which is seeking to make sense of the various projects that are taking place. Meeting convened by IL at LGA involving DCMS, Centre for Cultural Value, CLOA and Audience Agency.</p> <p>TD &amp; VB will be meeting National Cultural Observatory data team to discuss how to build a system that mirrors how we expect to be working in future.</p>

		<p>Higher Education roundtable event – still needs planning.</p> <p><b>Action – VB to shape agenda and work with HB to set a date, promote to members.</b></p> <p>DP - suggested we could have a governance structure chart indicating how by being a member of CLOA means that people are linked in with and therefore influencing wider national groups, forums and bodies.</p> <p><b>Action – DP to begin drafting this with input from VB, JR and HB.</b></p>
8	EDI working group update	<p>In advance of the meeting a report was circulated that included comparator graphs to illustrate the findings from the Protected Characteristics survey for CLOA Members, which ran just before Christmas.</p> <p>ZL – introduced the report explaining how it incorporated data from the earlier survey of CLOA Executive members alongside the 2021 Census. 97 responses were received to the members survey from 394 members (full, retired and honorary) which represents just under 25%. The aim is to increase this response rate in future.</p> <p>TD - talked through the findings and highlighted the comparator data including variables around age, gender identity, religion, disability and also how the census wording differs slightly.</p> <p>ZL – advised that the EDI working group can only hold up a mirror and identify areas where we can influence and share best practice. As no one person can be representative of any of the categories, the focus should be on self-reflection, learning, listening and allyship. It would be disingenuous to actively recruit those who represents a particular ‘category’, rather the aim should be that people feel that they belong.</p> <p>DK – suggested that CLOA would benefit from forging connections with disability forums in order to ensure the relevant voices are influencing our thinking.</p> <p>ZL - advised that she has contacted the Business Disability Forum to enquire about training.</p> <p>ZL – also shared the next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to existing Diverse Ethnic Groups, LGBTQ+ networks/staff groups to express allyship and invite them to contribute to our thinking</li> <li>• Create blog/v-log based on findings from the survey of Protected Characteristics</li> <li>• Update the self-assessment form to ask for best practice examples</li> <li>• Ask members for nominations to CLOA– recognition of great work</li> </ul> <p><b>Action – ZL to create a blog/v-log reflecting CLOAs journey to date, share the survey findings and the planned next steps as a result of the data.</b></p> <p><b>Action – HB to revise the wording on the self-assessment form and share with the Executive Committee for use in May/June.</b></p>
9	LGA update	<p>IL –shared an update from Local Government Association.</p> <p>Eve Roodhouse, former Director of Culture at Leeds Council, has been appointed permanent Director for Strategy and Policy at the LGA. Sue</p>

		<p>Thiedeman MBE has joined the CTS team for 10.5 hours a week to support work on the economic growth areas – creative industries and visitor economy. The LGA will also host an AHRC Fellow for 2026/27 to support the local LUCIA projects and create reports accessible for council practitioners.</p> <p>The LGA Chair met with the Secretary of State for DCMS on 27 January, for a very positive conversation about place-based investment. The LGA is following up with case studies and visit options. LGA CTS Board Chair also met with Stephanie Peacock MP, Minister for Sport, where there was a focus on cashable savings for the NHS.</p> <p>The LGA has submitted a letter to the Spending Review, with a heavy focus on prevention, reflecting the asks of the Active Wellbeing Network.</p> <p>The LGA has also responded to CMS select committee enquiries into community and school sport, and heritage – IL offered thanks to CLOA Executive members for their input. The Committee has an open call for suggestions for future inquiries, <a href="#">The State of Play inquiry</a> which CLOA may want to respond to.</p> <p>The LGA is contacting local government appointees to the new visitor economy council and creative industries sector plan working group to ensure the wider sector can be reflected in conversations.</p>
10	Discussion to shape the content for April Members mtg	<p>Following on from the 10 April Executive mtg there will be an afternoon session between 1300-1530, which will be open to the whole membership.</p> <p>JL – advised the Executive that LGA has kindly agreed to host the event at Smith Square and it's a great opportunity to share updates and recruit members for the CLOA Executive.</p> <p>PGP – suggested using the event to explain to members who the Executive are talking to and showing where people can get help. If the Governance chart is ready in time this could be shared.</p> <p>DP – alerted the Executive to the fact that the meeting is in the Easter holidays for some areas, and so may affect attendance. DP also asked if we can get a sense of how many people will be attending.</p> <p><b>Action – HB to begin promoting the event as soon as possible in order that we can plan accordingly.</b></p> <p>DK – suggested embedding a mini roundtable into the afternoon. Also, that giving people an opportunity to introduce themselves may assist with networking (use 1 min format) and recruit new Executive members.</p> <p>A number of items that were suggested for discussion groups: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Devolution and Local Government Review – IL offered to ask the LGA devolution lead to speak</li> <li>- How we can support people in challenging times – what do they need in terms of practical support.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a platform for sharing innovative ideas to keep services afloat e.g. the Agency solution for NI, reducing energy and other costs</li> <li>- Update on the EDI work – however ZL is not able to attend, so this would need to be another member of the group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action – HB to liaise with JR, DP, VB and IL to draft a programme for the afternoon members event.</b></p> <p><b>Action – HB to remind Xn Leisure and Playfootball that they are invited to attend the April mtg</b></p>
11	Update on AGM & Conference	<p>HB – advised the committee that since the last meeting in September, members of the AGM working group had met to refine ideas for conference.</p> <p>Our conference theme this year is ‘The role of culture, creativity and physical activity in supporting community cohesion’.</p> <p>Sunder Katwala, Director at British Future has agreed to speak to CLOA members about ‘How arts and creativity can help build more cohesive communities’ drawing on the report Creating Connections and research that has been done on the role of the creative arts in helping to build social connection and community cohesion.</p> <p>We have also secured Sally Lloyd-Evans, a community geographer from University of Reading who has been working in the field of building community trust and feedback loops with Reading Council, which is key in social cohesion. Sally led on the Whitley Researchers – which focused on collaboration, co-production and participation to help local communities and organisations understand and tackle the complex issues surrounding wellbeing and social exclusion in Reading.</p> <p><b>Action – send a letter from JR to Culture secretary Lisa Nandy, who recently placed social cohesion as one of the three central challenges in the UK.</b></p> <p>HB – invited the Executive to make other suggestions for strong speakers on this topic.</p> <p>IL advised that LGA has just commissioned The Belong Network to look at role of culture and leisure services in cohesion.</p> <p><b>Action – HB to liaise with IL regarding sharing any resulting report as part of the conference.</b></p> <p>TD – suggested inviting Children’s Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza, who in <a href="#">this report</a> concludes that they joined the unrest last year because of their curiosity about the events, animosity towards the police, or a lack of youth activities and limited job opportunities.</p> <p><b>Action – send a letter of invite to Dame Rachel de Souza from JR.</b></p> <p><b>Action – HB to issue a call to the membership for showcase examples around this theme in early May.</b></p>
12	Roundtable programme – update on	A further two roundtables had been held since the September meeting:-



	delivery and development of further content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">An Audience with the DCMO Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy</a> took place on 21 November 24. It was Chaired by JR and attracted 65 attendees.</li> <li>• A roundtable focusing on <a href="#">Cultural Compacts</a> took place on 2 December 24 and attracted 41 attendees.</li> </ul> <p>HB – advised that currently no roundtables are in the planning stage.</p> <p><b>Action – sub-groups to review plans and formulate priorities for topics.</b></p>
13	A.O.B	<p>TD – highlighted that leisure customer system providers don't currently allow draw through to Open Data.</p> <p>PGP – added that Moving Communities are experiencing a challenge around gathering data and this is an issue to seek to resolve.</p>
	Dates of next meetings	<p>Dates of next Executive mtgs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 10th April 25 1030-1500 in person, LGA Offices, Smith Square, London</li> <li>• AGM and members conference – agreed for morning Wednesday 18th June 25</li> </ul>