

Award Overview

The Chief Culture and Leisure Association (CLOA) Aspiring Leaders Awards are now open to nominations until **Tuesday 3rd of February 26 at 1700.**

The Aspiring Leaders Awards underpins CLOA's commitment to celebrate emerging talent and future changemakers across the cultural and leisure sectors. It also aims to spotlight exemplary practice in Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and sustainability.

Nomination Categories

There are four distinct categories for nominations:

1. **Aspiring Leader – Culture, Creativity and Heritage (including libraries, tourism)**
Recognising an emerging leader making a meaningful impact within the cultural sector.
2. **Aspiring Leader – Leisure and Physical Activity (including parks and green spaces)**
Celebrating a rising star demonstrating leadership and innovation in leisure services.
3. **Aspiring Leader – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)**
Honouring an individual who champions inclusive practices, with a particular emphasis on advocacy for people with disabilities.
4. **Aspiring Leader – Sustainability**
Acknowledging a leader advancing sustainable approaches, especially those aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

General Criteria (applied to all categories)

Criteria	Score Range
Local Impact	1-5
Strength of Nomination	1–5
Emerging Leadership	1–5

Aspiring Leader – Culture, Creativity and Heritage

This award recognises an emerging leader working within the cultural sector who is making a meaningful and measurable impact at a local level. It celebrates individuals who demonstrate vision, creativity, and commitment to enriching cultural life within their communities whether through heritage preservation, arts programming, public engagement, or cultural policy development.

Nominees may be council officers who have led or contributed to initiatives that:

- Strengthen local identity and pride through cultural heritage.
- Increase access to arts and culture for underrepresented groups.
- Foster collaboration across departments, sectors, or communities.
- Champion inclusive and innovative approaches to cultural development.
- Embed cultural values into broader strategic priorities such as regeneration, health and wellbeing, or education.

This award highlights the importance of cultural leadership within local government and the role it plays in shaping vibrant, inclusive, and resilient communities.

Criteria	Score Range
Sector Contribution	1–5
Inclusivity Practice	1–5

Aspiring Leader – Leisure and Physical Activity

This award celebrates an emerging leader who is driving innovation and inclusion within local leisure and physical activity services. It recognises individuals who are improving health and wellbeing outcomes through creative, community-focused approaches to service delivery.

Nominees may be council officers who have:

- Developed or led programmes that increase participation in physical activity, especially among underrepresented groups.
- Introduced inclusive and accessible leisure services that respond to local needs.
- Fostered partnerships across departments (e.g. public health, youth services, housing) to embed physical activity into wider strategic goals.
- Demonstrated leadership in adapting services to meet changing community demands, such as post-pandemic recovery or cost-of-living challenges.

This award highlights the role of leisure services in building healthier, more connected communities and the leadership required to make that happen.

Criterion	Score Range
Service Innovation	1–5
Community Engagement	1–5

Aspiring Leader – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

This award honours an emerging leader who is championing equity, diversity, and inclusion within local government services. It recognises individuals who are actively working to dismantle barriers, amplify underrepresented voices, and embed inclusive practices into everyday operations.

Nominees may be council officers who have:

- Advocated for and implemented inclusive policies or programmes, particularly those supporting people with disabilities.
- Created platforms for co-production and community voice, ensuring lived experience informs service design.
- Led internal change to improve workplace culture, recruitment, or representation.
- Delivered training, campaigns, or initiatives that raise awareness and drive meaningful change.

This award celebrates those who are not only committed to fairness and representation but are also influencing others and creating lasting impact.

Criterion	Score Range
EDI Advocacy	1–5
Representation and Voice	1–5

Aspiring Leader – Sustainability

This award acknowledges an emerging leader who is advancing sustainability within local government, aligning their work with environmental responsibility and the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#). It recognises individuals who are embedding sustainable thinking into service design, delivery, and strategic planning.

Nominees may be council officers who have:

- Led or contributed to initiatives that reduce environmental impact, promote circular economy principles, or improve climate resilience.
- Integrated sustainability into cultural, leisure, or community programmes.
- Influenced policy or practice across departments to support long-term environmental goals.
- Engaged communities in sustainability efforts, fostering awareness and behaviour change.

This award highlights the importance of local leadership in tackling global challenges and building a greener, fairer future.

Criterion	Score Range
Sustainability Leadership	1–5
Ethical and Environmental Responsibility	1–5