

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date:	Thursday 29th January 2026
Place:	Via Teams
Times:	0930 - 1230
Participants:	CLOA Executive – Bobsie Robinson, Caroline O'Neill, Caroline Rae, Dan Buck, Donna Pentelow, Grant Taylor, Hagan Lewisman, Ian Jones; Jayne Knight, Jon Finch, Jonathan Cochrane, Julie Russell, Mark Allman, Paula Redway, Penny Greenwood-Pearsons, Shane Williams, Thorsten Dreyer, Tom Gubbins, Val Birchall, Vincent Paliczka, Ullash Karia, Zsuzsi Lindsay, CLOA Business Manager – Heidi Bellamy
Apologies:	CLOA Executive – Tony Witton, Kate Price LGA Observer – Ian Leete

	Item Description	Relevant business considered, facts noted, decisions taken and actions agreed
1	Minutes & matters arising	<p>The minutes of the meeting 19th September 25 were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate record.</p> <p>No matters arising were noted.</p> <p>Action - Executive members to continue providing short statements for the ebulletin when attending external meetings.</p>
2	Sport & Physical Activity sub-group update	<p>PGP - advised that the Sport & Physical Activity Sub-group met earlier in the week; the action plan has now been refreshed. Parks & Open spaces missing from action plan</p> <p>Action – PGP and UK to develop this.</p> <p>Awaiting the right moment to request a meeting with new CEO of Sport England Simon Hayes, however a meeting with Kevin Mills is planned for later today. CLOA has been invited to be involved more in the development of the place based element of the Moving Communities platform to help scope out what local authorities want to see.</p> <p>PGP – keen to maintain position that Sport England requested work requires funding.</p> <p>HL - Swimming Alliance has a new chair Andy Salmon from Swim England. The alliance brings together national organisations united to</p>

	Active Wellbeing Leadership Network update	<p>address the challenges facing swimming, so CLOA will be monitoring the direction of travel with this new leadership.</p> <p>JR – had attended the DCMS public leisure working group and raised concerns about language being too “sport-centric” and lacking health/active wellbeing framing.</p> <p>Action – JR to share ToRs for DCMS group and Exec members to provide feedback/questions for DCMS.</p> <p>Active Wellbeing Leadership Network continues to provide strong peer value, but capacity issues remain. Alliance have offered to host a microsite and provide admin support.</p> <p>DB and SW – offered to support evolution of AWLN.</p> <p>Action – JR to progress microsite development with Alliance and work with other Exec volunteers to help shape it.</p> <p>Action – JR to liaise with HB to create a connection across to www.cloa.org.uk</p>
3	Culture sub-group update	<p>VB – advised that CLOA are seeking influence through Chairing the National Alliance, JF’s chairing of English Civic Museums Network, RC’s work with VisitEngland, TD’s role on data groups including close liaison with the development of the National Cultural Data Observatory, the National Heritage Capital project and English Public Libraries data.</p> <p>The sub-group worked with LGA and the National Alliance for Cultural Services on a response to the Hodge Review. ECMN also submitted a response which JF ensured was consistent with the wider position.</p> <p>Action – HB has added the response letter to the Hodge Review onto the CLOA website and included a summary article in the ebulletin.</p> <p>DP & TD - recently met Laura Dyer ACE Deputy Chief Executive and David Johnson. He is the new lead for local Government Partnership and attends the Alliance and participates in a variety of calls.</p> <p>VB - also attended the recent ACE local stakeholders meeting. Laura Dyers reflections on the Hodge Review largely mirrored CLOA’s (especially in relation to the notion of community arts workers).</p> <p>Upcoming strategies for libraries (Spring), tourism (now expected in the Autumn).</p> <p>National Cultural Framework project is progressing. Next stage is review with Alliance at LGA 4 March 26, followed by policy hack event in April 26. DCMS, Combined Authorities and ACE on the steering group. Next phase will be capacity/skills/workforce development – roundtable later in the year.</p> <p>VB – had provided position statements for Arts and Data in advance of the meeting attachments for review. The purpose is so that anyone going to a meeting representing CLOA, can draw on the agreed position. They are in a common format and the culture sub group are planning to develop them for museums and tourism too, and possibly some other areas – including libraries. The culture ones are consistent with the National Alliance positions.</p>

		<p>CON – suggested references to the ACW and WG in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Action - In order for these to be signed off and published deadline of 12th February for amends to VB.</p>
4	<p>EDI working group update inc. findings from the Protected Characteristics survey for CLOA Member</p> <p>Aspiring Leaders Awards – update on nominations</p>	<p>The baseline charts from the recent Protected Characteristics survey for CLOA Executive & Members were shared in advance of the meeting. ZL – introduced the findings and highlighted that overall, the data shows positive movement, though with the caveat of a 30% membership response rate, meaning trends are directional rather than definitive. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age and disability disclosure on the Executive - more leaders reporting limiting conditions. • Disability representation remains below the level expected under the Equality Act, so this continues to be a priority. • Trust indicators are strong, with low “prefer not to say” responses and improved participation. • Gender representation on the Executive appears lower than in the membership, though this may be influenced by women’s higher likelihood to respond to surveys. <p>Suggested next steps include maintaining a watching brief on disability and age, aiming for a higher response rate next year, explore feasibility for a future membership register to understand the full demographic picture, and potentially marking International Women’s Day on 8 March 26 with a simple, collective action from women on the Executive.</p> <p>ZL – updated the committee on the nominations received so far for the Aspiring Leaders Award. The nominations system has been up and running since beginning of November 2025. So far, we have received only 7 applications to date:- 4 strong submissions for Culture, Creativity & Heritage Category, 2 for Leisure and Physical Activity (including parks & open spaces) and 1 for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. No one has yet been nominated under the category of Aspiring Leader – Sustainability ZL – urged the urged the Executive Committee to consider nominating (particularly under the categories where we only have 1 or none!)</p> <p>Action – HB include a final promotional push article in the ebulletin.</p> <p>Action – HB to send all nominations along with an initial Co-pilot summary review against the criteria for the EDI working group to consider.</p> <p>Action – The EDI group will review nominations between February – March 2026 with a view to making the awards at the June 26 AGM.</p>
5	Draft conference programme	<p>The AGM & Conference working group met in mid-November and a smaller group convened on 15 January 26.</p> <p>The early draft programme for the event, which will take place on Tuesday 16 June 2026, between 915 – 1300 via MS Teams was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p>

		<p>Action – All Executive to put date in calendars and make a note that registration is required to attend the event.</p> <p>2 high calibre keynote speakers have been secured:- Professor Sir Michael Marmot and Professor Daisy Fancourt.</p> <p>Copy for the showcase call out has been drafted and is awaiting sign off by the working group.</p> <p>Action – HB to circulate a call out for case studies in mid-February</p> <p>The Executive Committee gave consideration to who might make a great contributor to the panel discussion provocation ‘Culture, Heritage and Active Wellbeing: Proven Drivers, Perpetual Cuts’</p> <p>DP - suggested Cllr Julie Jones-Evans in her role as CTS Chair</p> <p>Action – HB to check with Ian Leete how elections may affect</p> <p>Other potential panel speakers identified in the discussion included:-</p> <p>Regional Mayors:- Tracy Brabin (West Yorkshire) and Oliver Coppard (South Yorkshire)</p> <p>A representative from Reform UK (reflecting likely political shifts post-May)</p> <p>Central Government / Treasury / Civil Service</p> <p>Deputy Director, DCMS – IV pursuing this via contacts.</p> <p>Treasury representative - someone who can speak to why evidence on prevention and culture doesn’t translate into investment</p> <p>Section 151 Officer - to reflect the financial gatekeeping role in local budget decisions</p> <p>Harman Sagar - Head Economist at DCMS has worked with various organizations, including HM Treasury.</p> <p>Dr John Argent - Chair of Moving Communities, with a leisure background</p> <p>Sector / Advocacy / Data Organisations - linked to Moving Communities; works with DCMS on data for funding</p> <p>Chief Executives with strong prevention/culture leadership</p> <p>Summary of Panel Composition Preferences</p> <p>The group leaned toward a balanced panel representing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political decision-making (LGA CTS Chair or a Regional Mayor) 2. Financial decision-making (Treasury or Section 151 Officer) 3. Evidence and advocacy (DCMS economist or sector data leader) <p>DP - emphasised avoiding “shroud-waving” and ensuring the panel feels constructive, not defeatist.</p> <p>Action – all Executive to send through contact details for potential panellists</p>
6	Budget Update including availability of funds for projects	<p>A financial update was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>VP - reported that this year’s CLOA budget is more variable than usual, with both positive and negative movements. Thanks to additional sponsorship secured the previously forecast £2,000 deficit is now expected to become a small surplus.</p>

		<p>However, a significant future pressure is the loss of XN Leisure's £5,000 annual sponsorship, ending after many years of support. While the available operational cash remains healthy (around £70K), replacing this income will be important over the coming months.</p> <p>Membership changes continue to trend positively, with 10 new members joining and a closer balance emerging between individual and corporate memberships.</p> <p>All allocated project funds for the year have now been fully spent. The Building Capacity project is slightly overspent (£212), and the Chairs' delegated fund has been used for the membership review.</p> <p>VP - noted that the membership engagement initiative has only spent £200 of its £1,000 allocation and encouraged fuller use of this budget to support roundtables.</p>
	Progress on review of membership	<p>VP – advised that Stephen King Consultancy has been appointed to conduct the review of membership.</p> <p>Nine proposals were received and evaluated against the scoring framework. Four consultants were shortlisted and invited each to respond in writing to a short set of clarification questions to support the final selection.</p> <p>The review will deliver a comprehensive review of CLOA's membership model, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the current membership offer, value proposition and pricing structure. - Engagement with members through a survey, interviews and targeted consultation. - Benchmarking against relevant professional bodies and networks. - Analysis of motivations, barriers, and opportunities for growth and improved engagement. - Recommendations for a refreshed membership model, including options for structure, benefits, communications, and implementation. <p>The final Report will be available by mid-April and will be a substantive component of the April Executive agenda.</p> <p>Following on from the survey there will be a number of short interviews and you may be invited to participate depending on the focus (volunteers from different membership categories, representation from Wales, perspectives that would add depth or context to survey findings).</p> <p>Action - All Executive Committee members to complete the survey and encourage others in their Corporate membership to do so.</p>
7	Roundtable programme – update on delivery and development	<p>HB – advised that since Executive Committee last met three roundtables have been held:-</p> <p><u>Inclusive Culture</u>, 30 September 25 – attended by 46 people.</p> <p>Chaired by EDI Champion ZL with keynote speaker Andrew</p>

	<p>of further content</p>	<p>Miller MBE, it featured four case studies that demonstrate how CLOA members are embedding inclusion through co-creation with disabled people and inclusive marketing & communication to ensure accessibility and representation.</p> <p><u>Cultural Strategies Think Kit</u> 6 November 25 – attended by 65 people. This roundtable was in collaboration with LGA and University of Southampton and provided practical support for councils undertaking cultural strategies. Chaired by DP, Dan Ashton, Professor at University of Southampton gave the introduction and user case studies were shared by two CLOA Members.</p> <p><u>Preparing for the implementation of Martyn's Law</u>, 4 December 25 – attended by 56 people. This roundtable was Chaired by DB and looked at how public sector culture and leisure is preparing for the introduction of Martyn's Law in April 2027. In addition to two case studies, there was input from Associate sponsor Blake Morgan into the legal implications and a representative from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office gave an overview on the threat posed from terrorism to venues and public places.</p> <p>Additionally, a session was promoted by CLOA that explored how <u>local government reorganisation will reshape the landscape for cultural services</u>. This was hosted by the National Alliance for Cultural Services in partnership with the Local Policy Innovation Partnership.</p> <p>The Executive committee discussed emerging plans and put forward ideas for future roundtables:-</p> <p>RC – linked to the work on the response to the consultation on Visitor Levy, a roundtable is development with case studies from Edinburgh, Manchester and Pembrokeshire. Potentially this could take place towards the end of April 26.</p> <p>Action – RC to liaise with HB over dates and speakers.</p> <p>GT – in advance of the meeting had suggested a session focusing on Pride in Place funding from the government and the role of culture and leisure in driving good practice under this scheme.</p> <p>Action – GT to liaise with HB over dates and speakers.</p> <p>BR and PR - working with Sue Thiedeman from LGA on an outline for a Creative Industries round table.</p> <p>Action – BR and PR to ensure HB is kept informed on development so timely promotion and support can be offered.</p> <p>ZL – the EDI working group had suggested a roundtable featuring case studies from those awarded Aspiring Leaders in September 26.</p> <p>VB – linked to the work to develop the National Cultural Framework suggested a workforce capability, capacity, skills roundtable is likely to be offered in Autumn.</p>
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	LGR & Devolution peer network	<p>Action – VB to ensure HB is kept informed on development so timely promotion and support can be offered if relevant.</p> <p>ZL – added that as part of the EDI action plan there is still an intention to convene a roundtable with SOLACE/LGA.</p> <p>JK gave an update on the LGA & Devolution Peer Network, which was set up to enable members to explore ideas, challenges and opportunities around Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution, they offer a supportive place to discuss and shape our role.</p> <p>The first meeting was on 12 November 25 and JK talked about her work with the Norfolk & Suffolk Culture Board to ensure that the new Mayoral Authority and local government Unitaries' in the region invest in culture. The second meeting took place on 21 January 26, the peer speaker was Jo Ireland, Assistant Director: Culture, Leisure, Archives & Libraries at North Yorkshire Council who talked about their journey with a focus on leisure.</p> <p>In order to sustain the conversation – we need a volunteer to take the discussion forward and present a case study based on their own experience at the next session on 25 March 26 0900-1000</p> <p>Action – HB to put a call for case studies in the ebulletin and on LinkedIn</p> <p>The Executive agreed that the peer network is working well as a supportive space, and there was a wider conversation about whether CLOA has a formal organisational role in LGR and devolution beyond convening the peer network.</p> <p>Action – Executive to give consideration to whether CLOA should develop a position statement on LGR & Devolution and/or resource a coordinated advocacy stance.</p>
8	General Updates LGA update:	<p>IL – had sent through a summary of the work that has been undertaken by the CTS team over the last few months:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGA is going through a significant restructure to refocus on membership responsiveness, data and technology. It will bring together the LGA's improvement and policy teams into new Impact teams, responding to the needs of councils. Culture and the ACE/SE improvement programmes are both proposed to sit within the Economic Growth and Communities Impact Team. Final structures will be in place by the end of April. • Work is progressing on the Cultural Framework, in partnership with the National Alliance and CLOA, with consultants appointed and developing proposed case study and test bed areas. • The LGA has published its guide on <u>the role of sports, arts, and culture in supporting community cohesion</u>, which was launched on 27 January alongside wider cohesion guidance at an event with the Minister for Communities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGA has supported and is hosting guidance developed by Libraries Connected, ACE, and The National Archives to support heads of libraries and archives to ready their services for local government reorganisation. • The LGA is supporting two amendments to the Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill – one by the Earl of Clancarty to introduce a cultural competency for Combined Authorities, and one by Lord Freyberg to include tourism as part of the economic and regeneration competency. • The CTS team are preparing to support the development of Government's forthcoming Libraries, Physical Activity, and Visitor Economy Strategies.
9	A.O.B	<p>RC - drafted a response to the Visitor Levy Consultation, which the government has opened on the design of a new local overnight visitor levies. The response has been created in liaison with Sue Thiedeman at the LGA so there is broad alignment between the two sets of answers. The consultation ends mid-February, so comments need to be sent to RC by 6 February in order to assimilate into response.</p> <p>Action – Executive to review and RC to finalise. HB to send from official CLOA Inbox before the deadline.</p>
	Dates of next meetings	<p>Dates of next Executive mtgs:</p> <p>DP advised that she was no longer available for the meeting that was originally scheduled on 27th April 26.</p> <p>Action – HB to liaise with VP, DP and Stephen King to identify an alternative date as the membership review will form a significant component of the agenda.</p> <p>N.B this has now been moved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 30th April 26 0930-1300 via Teams • AGM and members conference – Tuesday 16th June 26