

## Place-based collaboration for culture and heritage: East and Midlands regions

Tuesday 5 October 2021

Chair's opening remarks

**Cllr Barry Lewis**, LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board member and Leader, Derbyshire County Council

- The LGA is delighted to be working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England and Historic England on the important topic of place-based collaboration for culture and heritage.
- Culture and heritage have a really significant role to play in our national recovery from COVID-19. The pandemic has taken a major toll on our communities and local areas, and as we begin to move into a period of recovery, councils are increasingly thinking about the bigger challenges.
  - Bringing life back to the high street and managing the issue of empty shops
  - Bridging the attainment gap for children who have missed out on formal schooling during the pandemic
  - Addressing rising levels of mental ill health and loneliness
  - Ensuring local people have the skills they need to find high quality, sustainable work and growing local economies
- Culture, creativity and innovation have an important role to play in addressing all these issues. Cultural infrastructure is what creates places in which people want to live and work. It can rebrand failing towns and cities, draw investment and create jobs. And more importantly, contribute to better quality of life for our communities.
- We know councils have a huge role to play in supporting this work. Councils are the biggest public funder of culture, heritage and leisure, spending over £2.2bn each year in England alone.
- They **run a wide range of facilities**, including 3,000 libraries, 350 museums, 116 theatres, 27,000 parks and green spaces and numerous castles, amusement parks, monuments, historic buildings and heritage sites. These organisations make up the cultural backbone of our country and are embedded in communities – they are a ready-made network of facilities which can reach out to everyone in society, including the most vulnerable.
- We know that cultural regeneration led by the local authority has a proven track record of **supporting economic growth** and turning around the fortunes of a town or region.

- They also play a wider **place-shaping role** as conveners and leaders of place.
- Any examples of work from your locality or region welcome!
- This role is so important at the moment as we move slowly into recovery, but councils don't stand alone in this - partnerships and collaboration are what makes our work in this area possible, which is why we're so pleased to be part of this collaborative event with the partners here today.
- Funding from these partners provides a lifeline to many culture and heritage services and organisations at a local level, but as initiatives like the Towns Fund, the Heritage Action Zones and Arts Council Compacts have shown, the relationship can be most productive when it is delivered in partnership around place.
- The purpose of this event to help councils to connect with national culture and heritage organisations, to share best practice and broaden awareness of the types of place-based approach that national funders can support, particularly in the context of COVID-19 recovery.