

4. Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit

Evidence and probes for self-assessment

Themes and criteria	Evidence and probes
<p>1. Leadership and corporate governance</p> <p>1.1 Leaders have a clear vision for culture and sport, position them in corporate and local strategic partnership priorities, and can demonstrate their impact on these priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the council articulated a vision for culture and sport in the local area? How widely owned and understood is it by other members and the local strategic partnership (LSP)? How well is it aligned to corporate priorities? ▪ Do elected members and the LSP recognise the value of culture and sport as a contributor to achieving corporate priorities and outcomes? ▪ Have political and managerial leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ actively led and directed the development of the mission, vision, and values of the organisation? ○ been active in developing and improving culture and sport opportunities? ○ helped established a culture of excellence by being roles models? ○ attended and participated in learning events and activities? ○ demonstrated that they value new ideas and initiatives and are supportive when things go wrong? ○ given priority to improvement initiatives when allocating resources? ○ actively collaborated in the organisation and encouraged others to do likewise? ○ advocated and managed change effectively? ○ demonstrated their personal commitment to equal opportunities?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are political and managerial leaders visible and vocal in supporting culture and sport? ▪ Is culture and sport championed at cabinet and portfolio levels? ▪ Does the portfolio holder/chair with responsibility for culture and sport culture seek to influence other portfolio holders? Has this been effective in raising the profile of culture and sport at the strategic level and has this been reflected in decision making?
<p>1.2 Leaders consistently engage with the community and with partners, and can demonstrate the value of engaging with them in achieving agreed outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have political and managerial leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identified and engaged key stakeholders? ○ managed their relationship with key stakeholders in a way that enhances the credibility and reputation of the organisation? ○ utilised their relationship with key stakeholders to achieve shared objectives? ○ listened to and understood the needs and aspirations of the community and partners? ○ promoted the establishment and maintenance of partnership working? ○ valued and recognised the work of partners? ○ understood and valued the distinctive nature of the voluntary, community and private sectors? ○ been actively involved with local culture and sport organisations? ○ been actively involved with regional cultural agencies?

<p>1.3 Leaders consistently motivate and support people to improve services and recognise and champion success in culture and sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have political and managerial leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ communicated the organisation’s vision, mission and strategy and motivated other to deliver it? ○ made themselves accessible and approachable? ○ supported managers and staff by making them feel valued, particularly when things go wrong? ○ been involved in celebrating success?
<p>1.4 Leaders promote and maintain effective governance arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is culture and sport effectively represented at executive/political leadership level and by scrutiny? ▪ Are there specific portfolio holders/spokespersons? ▪ Are other members encouraged to engage with the culture and sport agenda? ▪ Is there a high level of understanding and engagement among members on issues and opportunities facing culture and sport? ▪ Have political and managerial leaders welcomed and created opportunities for internal scrutiny and external challenge of service delivery? ▪ Can managers and staff demonstrate how the organisation has opened itself up to external scrutiny and used this to improve services?

<p>2. Policy and strategy</p> <p>2.1 The organisation has a clear strategy that is delivering outcomes through culture and sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How effectively is culture and sport reflected in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the sustainable community strategy? Is it identified explicitly as a policy theme and/or as a potential contributor to achieving other objectives through a strategic and cross-cutting approach? ○ the corporate plan? Do other strategies and plans reflect the contribution of culture and sport to corporate priorities? ○ business/service or action plans of other council services such as children and young people, community safety and other high level plans? ○ the LAA in contributing to national and local targets for crime, education, employment, health, housing and liveability? ▪ Is there a separate strategy or plan for culture and sport and does it relate to the sustainable community strategy, corporate plan and priority targets? ▪ Does the strategy/plan relate to neighbour authorities or with relevant strategies and plans where there are two tiers of local government? ▪ Have the key issues for the council and what needs to be done to address them been identified in relation to culture and sport? ▪ Who are the target groups for culture and sport and are they the same for the council and the LSP?
<p>2.2 The organisation is setting ambitious targets to achieve its aims and objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are specific targets and objectives set relating to the outcomes to be achieved and are they clear and understood by staff and stakeholders? ▪ Is there is a clear 'golden thread' that links strategic plans to service plans and individual work programmes? ▪ Are there are clear targets to address inequality and meet priority groups' needs in the community?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there clear improvement targets where objectives are not being met? ▪ Has the organisation used benchmarking to compare and improve its performance? ▪ How focused is the organisation on its priorities and how effective is it in achieving its objectives and agreed outcomes?
<p>3. Community engagement</p> <p>3.1 The organisation has maintained capacity for effective community engagement and used it to improve culture and sport opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there systems to ensure the organisation is aware of the needs of its communities and how these are changing? Do these systems ensure the needs of disaffected or under-represented groups are identified and are understood? ▪ Are systems integrated with other consultation mechanisms elsewhere in the council and the LSP? ▪ Is there a published approach to community engagement? ▪ Does the organisation learn from successful consultation approaches and share this learning? ▪ Does the organisation manage the risks inherent in consultation and engagement? ▪ Has there been a skills audit? Are staff trained to undertake consultation and community engagement? Is community engagement recognised as a competency requirement for managers and staff? ▪ Is capacity built in the community and in key organisations to enable them to express their views, in particular with hard-to-reach and disaffected communities?

<p>3.2 The organisation can demonstrate how consulting with and involving communities, the voluntary and the business sectors has improved culture and sport opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What has been done to ensure plans and strategies are effectively informed by consultation? ▪ Is there evidence of effective communication and consultation with service users and non-users and with hard-to-reach and under-represented groups? ▪ Has market research been used to inform marketing plans and strategies? ▪ Are school or young people’s forums used? ▪ Do staff regularly attend community forums or area committees? Do they regularly meet ward councillors to seek their views and opinions on the service? ▪ Are there regular satisfaction surveys? ▪ Does consultation enable all sectors of the community to participate – are accessibility barriers and language taken into account when carrying out consultation? ▪ Are there effective feedback systems to consultees? ▪ Are the results of community engagement apparent in service strategies, plans and performance reports? ▪ Is there evidence that services have improved as a result of consultation? ▪ Is the organisation trusted and valued by local people and organisations in the community through its approach to consultation and engagement?
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<p>4. Partnership working</p> <p>4.1 The organisation has a mature and trusting relationship with its partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can people working at all levels in the organisation describe the benefits of the partnerships they work with? ▪ Are the reasons for partnership working clearly understood across the organisation? ▪ Are there clear links between partnership work and the organisation’s strategic aims, objectives and agreed outcomes? ▪ Are staff able to clearly articulate the contribution of partnerships to achieving their service objectives, and their contribution to partnerships’ objectives? ▪ Do staff attending partnership meetings clearly understand their roles and responsibilities? ▪ Are they empowered to take decisions when they represent the council on partnerships? ▪ Are managers and staff working with neighbour authorities in two-tier areas or with parish councils clear about their roles and responsibilities? ▪ Does the organisation involve partners in joint decision making and is it willing to devolve service decisions to partners including resource allocation?
<p>4.2 The organisation has maintained effective partnerships to meet its strategic objectives and support the local strategic partnership and other key partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How committed is the organisation to partnership working? Is it valued and properly resourced and do senior managers attend meetings regularly? ▪ How well does the organisation work with neighbour authorities on culture and sport and other corporate priorities? ▪ How well is strategic and operational working coordinated? Is partnership working reflected in service delivery? Is there joint planning? ▪ Is there evidence of partners being open to using culture and sport to tackle difficult issues in new ways?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where does culture and sport sit in the LSP – is it a specific thematic group? Is it built in across other thematic group? ▪ How well is culture and sport represented on the LSP board? Is there a specific chair/spokesperson? What is their level of understanding about the contribution of culture and sport? ▪ What mechanisms are in place to enable culture and sport to engage with the LSP? Who from the council (members or officers) represents culture and sport on the LSP and is the director/head of service for culture and sport involved? ▪ What is the level of interaction between culture and sport services and the LSP as a whole? How are culture and sport organisations represented and are they able to contribute effectively? ▪ How do key LSP partners view the organisation in relation to culture and sport? Do partners recognise how culture and sport contribute to achieving their objectives? ▪ What mechanisms are in place in decision making for considering the contribution of culture and sport to cross-cutting themes? ▪ What support is provided to partners in implementing LSP decisions relating to culture and sport? ▪ How well does the organisation engage with regional cultural agencies and other sub-regional bodies, and at what level? ▪ Do managers and people working in the organisation work across the council and the LSP on cross-cutting projects and initiatives? ▪ When the organisation is due to take policy and budget decisions does it consult its partnerships? ▪ Does it take into account the impact of decisions on the partnerships and does it explain its decisions? ▪ Is the organisation willing to devolve service and resource decisions to partners and does it support these decisions when they are made?
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<p>4.3 The implications and impact on partnership arrangements have been at the forefront when policy and budget decisions have been taken.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When the organisation is due to take policy and budget decisions does it consult its partnerships? ▪ Does it take into account the impact of decisions on the partnerships and does it explain its decisions? ▪ Is the organisation willing to devolve service and resource decisions to partners and does it support these decisions when they are made?
<p>4.4 The organisation has continuously reviewed and modified its involvement in partnership arrangements and is able to demonstrate their value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the performance and relevance of all the partnerships in which the organisation is engaged regularly monitored and reviewed? ▪ Are all partnerships currently helping the organisation achieve its objectives and shared objectives of the partnership? ▪ Are you aware whether all partners share the same views about the value and importance of the partnership? Is this issue regularly discussed?
<p>5. Resource management</p> <p>5.1 Financial resources have been consistently matched with the changing strategic priorities of the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have budget priorities been aligned to deliver improved outcomes and priorities? ▪ Are resources allocated to culture and sport in line with corporate and LSP priorities, and do they reflect the contribution culture and sport make to these priorities? ▪ Does the organisation make collective resource decisions to ensure resources are targeted to achieve the organisation's objectives? Or do finance, people, and property management work separately to different agendas and priorities? ▪ Do support services work together to achieve a shared outcome?

<p>5.2 The organisation can demonstrate how it has effectively controlled its use of financial resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do budget monitoring systems provide accurate and up-to-date information? ▪ Are targets set for expenditure and income and have these led to performance improvement? ▪ How well do budget estimates reflect actual performance? ▪ Does budget monitoring take place at different levels of management and is budget management devolved to the lowest possible level? ▪ Is action taken based on monitoring of budget performance? ▪ Has effective budgetary management resulted in performance improvement?
<p>5.3 The organisation can demonstrate how it has continually improved efficiency and achieved value for money in the use of resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the organisation benchmark costs, services and processes to improve performance? ▪ Does the organisation review service and process design to improve performance and service satisfaction? ▪ Does the organisation have a strategic approach to commissioning services that achieves value for money (VFM) and service improvement? Does it jointly commission with the LSP or with neighbour authorities? ▪ Has the organisation developed long-term partnering arrangements to improve efficiency in service delivery? ▪ Does the organisation project manage significant projects and change processes, particularly where there are significant risks of delay or failure affecting service performance? ▪ Has it identified key areas of risk and produced a risk management strategy for them? ▪ Can the organisation evidence innovation and new ways of working?

<p>5.4 The organisation has continually attracted resources from outside the organisation delete which has enabled it to achieve improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the organisation successfully levered in external funding for culture and sport? ▪ Does the organisation understand the costs and benefits of attracting funding and does it achieve VFM? ▪ Are partners or potential partners seeking to invest resources in culture and sport based on their performance?
<p>5.5 The organisation can demonstrate the benefits of efficiently managing its physical assets (land and premises).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there a current asset management plan in place? ▪ Have property and land assets been used to stimulate and generate investment and improvement in the service? ▪ Has the organisation used its assets creatively to support service development and improvement?
<p>5.6 The organisation can demonstrate how it has used new technologies to achieve its strategic objectives and improve services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How well is technology being used to enhance information, accessibility, communication and delivery of culture and sport? ▪ Is the internet providing information and online booking facilities for users? ▪ Is an intranet site used to keep staff informed about the organisation and its performance? ▪ Is access card technology used to monitor usage? ▪ Is internet technology being used to support consultation?

Note: Organisations completing Investors in People (IIP) recently will be able to extrapolate evidence directly into this section of the assessment

<p>6. People management</p> <p>6.1 The organisation can demonstrate the impact of having a strategy for people management to improve its performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have strategies been developed to ensure that managers and staff are trained and developed to enable the organisation to improve its performance and achieve its objectives? ▪ What evidence is there that managers regularly consult staff when developing these strategies? Can staff confirm they are consulted and are aware of the strategies? ▪ Can staff explain how their individual and team objectives and targets contribute to the organisation’s overall objectives? ▪ Can managers and staff demonstrate how the organisation has invested in them to help them improve and achieve the organisation’s objectives?
<p>6.2 Learning and development opportunities make a positive impact on how the organisation’s objectives are achieved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can managers explain what they have done to help people working in the organisation learn and develop? ▪ Do managers and staff have the skills necessary to deliver services? ▪ Are managers aware of gaps in the market locally and nationally? Are there local trends that mean these gaps could appear in the future?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Is service demand likely to change and can new demands be met by retraining or recruitment?▪ Have staff been involved in identifying their learning and development needs?▪ Can managers and staff demonstrate the difference training and development has made to individual, team and organisational performance?▪ Can managers show how skill shortages have been addressed through recruitment or training?▪ Can managers and staff show where they have worked across the council and the LSP on cross-cutting projects and initiatives?▪ Are partners confident that managers and staff have the skills and understanding to carry out their roles and deliver on their and corporate priorities?▪ Does the organisation learn from what it does and communicate what it has learned to others? Has this learning enabled others to improve their services or how they work?▪ Are staff given the opportunity to develop a wider understanding of the work of the council and the LSP and understand culture and sport's contribution to it?
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<p>6.3 Equality of opportunity is integrated into people management strategies and organisational working practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can managers describe strategies that they have put in place to ensure equality of opportunity in staff development? ▪ Can staff explain the impact of these strategies and whether they recognise the needs of different groups? ▪ Do staff believe the organisation is genuinely committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in staff development? ▪ Has the organisation created a diverse workforce that reflects the community it provides for? Has this made a difference? ▪ Does the organisation enable people to work as flexibly as possible?
<p>6.4 Managers have been effective in leading, managing and developing people to a degree where improvement can be evidenced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are managers trained and developed effectively so that they can create an effective and efficient working environment? Do they have the skills to lead and develop other people? ▪ Are manager's good leaders? Do they give clear direction, set and maintain standards, give constructive feedback, praise and tackle poor performance where necessary? ▪ Do staff agree with this view?
<p>6.5 People take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the organisation have clear priorities that link staff development to its aims and objectives at organisation, team and individual level? ▪ Do staff clearly understand what their development activities should achieve, both for them and for the organisation?

<p>6.6 The impact of people's contribution to the organisation has been recognised, celebrated and valued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do managers create an environment where staff are encouraged and are confident in decision making appropriate to their role? ▪ Can staff show how they have been encouraged to be involved appropriately in decision making? ▪ Are staff given opportunities to develop a wider understanding of the work of the council and the LSP and understand culture and sport's contribution them? <p>Can staff show where they have contributed ideas and suggestions that have helped improve their own or others' performance?</p>
<p>7. Customer service</p> <p>7.1 The organisation consistently responds to what users want and need quickly and maintains and extends customer choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are systems in place to ensure staff listen to and understand the needs and concerns of users and non-users? ▪ Does the organisation know exactly who is and who is not using their services? Does it shape and deliver services to maximise participation and involve the local community? ▪ Does the organisation know what customers think about services? Does it know what makes them satisfied and dissatisfied? Is this information used to influence service design and staff training? <p>Does the organisation use online technology to allow customer access to information and organise their participation in culture and sport?</p>
<p>7.2 The organisation has maintained high standards of service and customer satisfaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the organisation achieve high levels of satisfaction with all its services across different parts of the community? ▪ Has the organisation published a customer care policy supported by staff awareness and training, and are complaints and compliments used to change and improve service?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have staff and customers been involved in setting standards? ▪ Does the organisation use surveys and reality checks to test their standards? ▪ Do the standards support the delivery of equal opportunities (for example, standards specific to particular client groups such as children, people with learning difficulties, produced in languages other than English)? ▪ Are staff and users involved in monitoring standards (for example, surveys, questionnaires, focus groups)? ▪ Is there external accreditation of customer service (for example, Quest, Green Flag, Charter Mark, Quality Assurance, Equality Standard)?
<p>8. Performance, achievement and learning</p> <p>8.1 The organisation has a culture of performance management running through all that it does.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do managers champion performance management (PM) to ensure a robust and effective approach? Do they lead by example (for example, by insisting on the right information on time and challenging poor performance)? ▪ Are members involved in PM? Does the cabinet lead member monitor and challenge performance? Does scrutiny regularly review performance? ▪ Is the organisation's PM system robust in translating vision, objectives and priorities into concrete plans? ▪ Is PM identified as a key management competency? Are managers and staff trained and developed in the techniques and skills required? ▪ Do managers and staff understand the link between collecting performance information and improving the service?
<p>8.2 The organisation maintains a well balanced range of high quality data and information which it uses to demonstrate how it performs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the organisation collect a range of suitable data that enables it to measure whether it is achieving its objectives and outcomes? ▪ Where appropriate do these include national and local performance indicators? ▪ Are these brought together to give a rounded view of performance – a balanced scorecard for example? What quantitative

	<p>and qualitative information is used to gain a rounded view of performance in relation to the service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is service performance measured alongside support services to achieve a rounded view of the organisation's performance? ▪ Does PM information appear on time and regularly so that performance can be tracked monthly or quarterly? Is data always reliable and are there systems to check the quality of data? ▪ Does the data enable objectives and targets relating to equality and diversity to be monitored? ▪ Is PM of culture and sport clearly linked to corporate and community priorities? Is the organisation's PM system linked across internal services and with external partners? Is PM information brought together to track individual and joint performance?
<p>8.3 The organisation can demonstrate the impact of actions taken as a response to performance information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is performance reported across the organisation? Are staff aware of performance and action required to address poor performance? ▪ How effectively and thoroughly is performance communicated to members, partners and other stakeholders? ▪ Where performance has not been good enough, what action has been taken to improve it? Have resources been allocated to address poor performance? ▪ Is good performance regularly communicated and celebrated? ▪ How has the corporate organisation utilised performance information to improve services?
<p>8.4 The organisation can demonstrate the impact of knowledge-based learning in its service planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do members and managers encourage staff to learn from PM; is best practice shared with others? Where things go wrong, are they openly discussed so people can learn from them? ▪ Are staff given enough time to digest information and discuss its implications? Is time set aside to regularly share learning?

	<p>Is technology used to collect and disseminate learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the organisation used self-assessment mechanisms to help them identify their strengths and weaknesses? Where this has happened did it result in an improvement plan that led to improvement? Was the plan regularly monitored and reviewed? ▪ Does the organisation learn from others in the council and from partners? Does it visit other councils and organisations to share learning? ▪ Has the organisation used external peer review or challenge? If so, was the process welcomed and open or viewed as a challenge? What was learnt that led to improvement? ▪ Does the organisation have a system to manage knowledge and learning?
<p>8.5 The organisation promotes change and manages it well to achieve improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the organisation regularly scan ahead to identify the need to change, and does it prepare for change by communicating how things might look in the future? ▪ When the organisation needs to change does it manage the process strategically? Does it communicate why change is necessary, and the outcome to be achieved from change? ▪ Does the organisation involve people in the process of changing, communicate and engage them in the process? Does it encourage ideas from people? ▪ Does the organisation communicate and engage with partners who may be affected by the change? <p>Is change seen as a positive thing to be welcomed?</p>

<p>8.6 The organisation has made a lasting impact on the lives of people and on where they live.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can the organisation measure and evidence its achievements? Can it show how culture and sport contribute to corporate and partnership priorities? ▪ Can the organisation show that it makes a difference to particular groups it has targeted in the community? ▪ Can the organisation show what difference it has made to people’s lives?