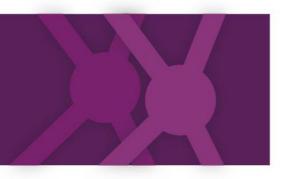


The impact of COVID-19 on culture, leisure tourism and sport

LGA research

July 2020



Introduction

From the beginning of lockdown, it was apparent that COVID-19 would have a significant impact on the culture, leisure, tourism and sport sectors. To gain a better understanding of this impact, the Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a series of interviews with senior council officers for culture and leisure between April and June 2020. The interviews were for the purposes of advocacy and to help the LGA to effectively identify the main challenges and tailor support accordingly.

Since these interviews took place the situation has moved on rapidly, with many cultural organisations being permitted to reopen from 4 July and most notably with the Government's announcement of an extremely welcome £1.57 billion rescue package for cultural organisations on 5 June.

However, the findings of this research remain relevant in explaining the context in the sector, highlighting some of the specific challenges faced during this time, identifying those that remain unresolved and articulating some of the challenges going forward. This report outlines these findings.

Context

When the UK went into lockdown on 23 March 2020, the culture and leisure sector, including museums, galleries, libraries, theatres, leisure centres were all required to close their doors to the public. Besides the effect on the community, this created an immediate loss of income with implications for the long-term financial sustainability of the sector.

Councils are one of the biggest funders of culture and leisure, spending around £2.2 billion a year on these services. Apart from libraries, they are in the main part discretionary services and cover museums, galleries, arts centres, theatres, music venues, leisure centres and swimming pools, parks and heritage sites. They are delivered across a wider range of delivery models, including in-house delivery, delivery via a contract with a leisure trust, a spun-out service or commercial operator, community delivered services and grant funding for local culture and leisure organisations.

Culture and leisure has been among the parts of the economy worst hit by COVID-19. Although the furlough scheme has provided a lifeline for many, much of the initial support package put forward by the Government was inaccessible to the sector. In June 2020, Community Leisure UK, the national membership body for charitable trusts delivering public leisure and culture services, reported that only six of their 100 members had been successful in securing a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.¹ The majority of culture and leisure organisations are relatively small, have narrow profit margins (where they generate any form of profit at all) and do not have significant reserves to rely upon. Some elements of the sector, including theatres and leisure centres have expensive venues which have costs associated with them irrespective of whether they are open to the public. For the most part these organisations are very reliant on income generation to support their business model and are often equally reliant on a volunteer workforce.

¹ <u>https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/6068/html/</u>

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According to ONS data on 18 June, 65.4 per cent of businesses in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector had paused trading and did not intend to open in the next two weeks. This represented the highest figure of any sector in the economy;77.9 per cent of their workforce was on furlough, the highest figure for any sector apart from accommodation and food services.²

On 17 June, the Creative Industries Federation cited research claiming that over 400,000 creative jobs could be lost this year, with the UK creative industries projected to lose \pounds 1.4 billion a week in revenue in 2020.³

On 7 July, trade body ukactive warned that without more government support, over half of leisure centres could close before the end of the year.⁴

The situation for the sector is changing rapidly, with many cultural organisations being permitted to reopen from 4 July and with the Government's welcome announcement of ± 1.57 billion rescue package for cultural organisations on 5 June. However, some parts of the sector (leisure in particular) have yet to benefit from a specific package of support and still face many of the same problems they did in May.

The research

To establish the impact of lockdown on culture and leisure services, the LGA held interviews with senior officers for culture and leisure between April and June 2020. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and a set of generic questions were used to provide a loose structure to the discussions.

The questions covered:

- i) The types of culture and leisure organisations that the council have a formal relationship with locally and how are they constituted.
- ii) The grant or contract arrangements in place.
- iii) The main issues that councils are facing in relation to local culture and leisure providers as a result of coronavirus.
- iv) The types of culture and leisure organisations facing the biggest financial challenges.
- v) Action the council plans to take or has already taken to support local providers.
- vi) Concerns for the longer-term implications of the lockdown on the local culture and leisure offer.
- vii) Plans in place for to support the recovery of culture and leisure providers in your council area.
- viii) What government support will be needed to help this recovery.

A total of 19 interviews were carried out between 28 April and 5 June 2020 with officers and other representatives from 16 councils.

It should be noted that the range of councils involved in the interviews does cover council type (unitary, metropolitan, London borough, district and county) and are geographically spread but it is not a representative sample and involvement was through nomination or self-selection.

²https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/businessservices/bulletins/coronavirusandtheecono micimpactsontheuk/18june2020

³ <u>https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/press-release-cultural-catastrophe-over-400000-creative-jobs-could-be-lost-projected-economic</u>

⁴ <u>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-53323286</u>

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Given that the pandemic and associated lockdown has taken place over such a condensed period it should also be noted that council thinking and approaches have evolved over the time of the interviews and therefore this thematic analysis should be seen as the state of play at a unique point in time for each of these councils. Whilst there are emerging themes and issues, a key point raised by those interviewed was the importance of local place and local action where a 'one size fits all' approach was not helpful so each council is developing a bespoke model to support culture, leisure, tourism and sport (CLTS) in their area.

Themes

The value placed on culture and leisure by councils

- Councils were regarded as having a key role in developing and supporting CLTS provision at a local level.
- CLTS was seen as integral to the economic vibrancy of the area. CLTS is very often a net-contributor to council budgets and supports other services provided by councils. In some cases, the income generated by CLTS activity supports the provision of statutory services.
- CLTS was seen as offering a very powerful draw for inward investment both in terms of the visitor-economy but longer-term such as business and household relocation. All of this investment has a positive impact on the local economy.
- CLTS has a key role in developing and supporting community through its linkage to the health and wellbeing agendas at a local level. It is often the most vulnerable that gain the greatest benefit from CLTS services through outreach work or provision of leisure and other services.
- Formal arrangements in place cover leisure centres, swimming pools, sports pitches, museums, art galleries, libraries, theatres and other live performance venues. The constitution of these relationships does vary within and between councils but the focus is on ensuring the best quality of service to the greatest number of people through the most cost-effective methods.
- Councils provide informal support, advice and guidance to a large range of small clubs, teams and groups and support them through provision of grant, ground maintenance contracts and the like.

Grant and contract arrangements in place

- Councils interviewed for this study had entered into a range of contract and grant arrangements with CLTS providers.
- Many councils have entered into social enterprise (SE) type contracts with leisure providers. These contracts have enabled there to be considerable investment in both local leisure facilities and services and have provided income (often a management fee) to the council.
- There is a relatively small group of national leisure providers who deliver contracts with a large number of councils.
- The social enterprise leisure provider model has been effective in terms of driving up the quality of leisure services in many areas, but effectiveness is entirely dependent on usage of facilities and the associated generated income. Closure of all leisure facilities in mid-March 2020 led to an immediate collapse in income.
- A small number of councils have retained CLTS in-house but these services are often provided through self-contained business units that enable them to utilise the support of the council but the ability to act independently as and when required to ensure best outcomes and value for money.

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- For cultural and other venues, councils have a wide range of arrangements in place be these independent trusts or similar contractual agreements with one or more providers.
- Councils provide important support of independent arts and cultural groups and organisations through a grants programme. They can also act as a facilitator to bring together various organisations (including funding bodies) to support the arts and culture in a local area. During the pandemic and associated lockdown, councils have provided signposting for arts and cultural organisations to sources of grant and support.

Early impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local culture and leisure providers

- The pandemic had an immediate impact on culture and leisure providers as all venues ceased to operate as at the third week in March, with the exception of green and open spaces.
- The closure of venues meant that there was an associated drop in income that led to concerns over both the short and longer term viability of cultural and leisure organisations and venues.
- Councils were approached by a wide range of CLTS organisations and providers asking for immediate support in the short-term. This took the form of either direct financial support (for example to pay provider staffing and other costs) or other action such as the deferring of business rate and management fee payments.
- Councils had to take immediate action (often agreed through either delegated decision or by the council leader/cabinet member and the chief executive or other senior officers) to support organisations in the short-term to ensure that they remained viable, but this placed pressure on already stretched budgets.
- All councils with contractual arrangements were keen for their delivery partners to remain viable as they did not have the capacity to take services back in-house.
- Members were overwhelmingly supportive of the measures taken to support CLTS providers in the short-term but were questioning how long support like this could remain in place.
- There was concern amongst councils, where their leisure partner was also a provider for other councils, that they may invest considerable funds in an organisation that would fail as other councils decided not to support. The work of Local Partnerships in brokering relationships between councils with the same leisure provider was seen as valuable in enabling councils to come together to take a combined approach.

Scale of the financial challenges facing culture and leisure organisations

- All CLTS services are facing financial challenges due to the pandemic and associated lockdown.
- In the short-term, cultural and leisure organisations have sought financial support from councils and other agencies such as Arts Council England and central Government (the Furlough Scheme for example) and were viable at the time of interview. There was concern that the real impact of the pandemic on cultural and leisure organisations would not be fully realised until the furlough scheme and other support comes to an end.
- Whilst short-term focus has been on leisure providers, the impact on live performance venues (such as theatres and music halls) is of real concern. As lockdown measures are eased it is thought that leisure and cultural sites will begin to re-open, though clearly it will not be business as usual and measures will have to be put in place to ensure the health and safety of both staff and visitors. For live performance venues, it is thought that these will not be able to open till all social distancing measures have been lifted. These venues rely on running at around 85 to 90 per cent to break even, with any profit coming from the remaining ten per cent and bar and hospitality sales. The longer social

distancing measures remain in place the less likely it is that all of these venues will reopen.

- Whilst not directly financial, the impact of the pandemic has had a negative effect on the production and talent pipeline. Councils expressed concern that future events and activities that were planned for the next year or so could now be less likely to take place due to inability of performance groups and artists to travel and/or have sufficient time to rehearse.
- Councils also highlighted the importance of one-off events such as air shows, literary festivals, theatre productions and the like. These events provide a significant boost to the local economy, are positive in terms of marketing and branding and also provide input to council budgets from income generated through parking and other charges. The longer-term viability of organisations that arrange and manage these events, as well as all the other associated business and service providers is uncertain. Linked to this is the fact that many creatives no longer have the capacity to create as the market for their products has paused. The result of this is that creatives have moved into other employment and there is no certainty that they will return to the creative industries once the pandemic comes to an end and this will cause issues going forward.

Council action

All councils in the study had acted very rapidly to support local CLTS providers. The action taken by councils included:

- 1. Negotiating support packages with service providers that included top-up payments for furloughed staff and deferring management and other fees.
- 2. Renegotiation of contracts to, for example, extend timescales for the repayment of loans.
- 3. The provision of business rate relief to local providers.
- 4. Innovative approaches to the use of grant mechanisms. Prior to COVID-19 many authorities provided grant on a quarterly or other basis. During the pandemic, many councils have provided total annual grant upfront for recipients to help their cashflow through the lockdown.
- 5. Signposting organisations to sources of support (be it Arts Council England or central government).
- 6. Facilitating conversation within and between organisations to consider how best to move forward.
- 7. Redeployment of staff, as and where possible, to support other council services such as food distribution, answering calls and queries and open space management.
- 8. The development of new ways of working within and between councils to support CLTS- for example, the creation of a regional structure that brings together a group of councils to consider how best to support local and regional providers.

Councils have also seen the pandemic closure as the opportunity to take positive action when thinking about the future of CLTS provision. Action taken included:

- 1. Rethinking the CLTS offer post-COVID-19, with a specific focus on integrating the CLTS offer into local economic recovery plans.
- 2. Proposed renegotiation of contracts with leisure and other providers. In a number of councils, there was concern pre-COVID-19 about the leisure provider contract in terms of performance and return on investment. The pandemic episode has provided the opportunity for a review of the current situation and the renegotiation of contracts.

- 3. Highlighting the importance of CLTS to the creation of place and the key role it has in the development and supporting of community health and wellbeing.
- 4. Developing and supporting new approaches to the consumption of culture, heritage and the arts though an increase in digital and online delivery and other innovative forms of engagement.
- 5. Carrying out renovations as well as essential maintenance and deep cleans of cultural and heritage sites made possible due to sites being closed.
- 6. More detailed conversations and information sharing with local businesses and employers around guidance and advice on easing the lockdown.
- 7. Highlighting the key importance of parks and open spaces. The recent lockdown has led to a considerable increase in usage of open and green spaces, especially parks and recreational areas. It was suggested that parks and open spaces had lacked investment from 2010 onwards and that this current rise in usage could lead to a renaissance for parks and open spaces and an understanding of their important place and role within the local area.
- 8. Comms work around encouraging the visitor economy with new promotional ideas and campaigns to encourage footfall at ease of lockdown and beyond.
- 9. Developing innovative ways of working especially with regard to re-opening the economy- for example, one council was developing a COVID-19 kite-mark rating for venue compliance to provide confidence to visitors.

Plans in place to support the recovery of culture and leisure providers

- All councils were developing plans for reopening of CLTS venues with the primary focus being the safety of staff and visitors.
- Some councils were capturing international best-practice from the experiences of arts, culture and leisure organisations in countries (particularly from the Far East and Europe) that had already experienced both lockdown and subsequent easing of restrictions and reopening of cultural and heritage sites.
- There was not a one size fits all approach to opening up venues as each one had its own challenges and specific issues that needed to be addressed.
- Venues, though closed, have been maintained to ensure all security and health and safety factors have been addressed. This has, at times, been at additional costs to councils.
- A key issue for CLTS providers was customer confidence. Providers were concerned that customers might be reluctant to return to venues.
- It was felt unlikely that all venues would be able to open at the same time even when lockdown restrictions had ceased. More specifically:
 - Libraries, museums and art galleries at the time of the interviews taking place, work was underway to ensure that effective social distancing can take place. Measures being introduced included timed entry, limiting the number of visitors present at any one time, developing one-way systems, installing screens and ensuring staff had appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - Leisure Centres work was underway to close changing rooms, remove some exercise equipment to reduce the number of gym users and ensure frequent cleansing and deep cleaning. There was a specific issue for councils whose leisure centres were linked to educational establishments with regard to when and how these might open given government guidance for schools to return for some years from 1 June 2020.
 - 3. Swimming pools -there was concern about the viability of opening up swimming facilities given the challenges associated with maintaining social distancing in a pool.

- 4. Golf courses these facilities were reopening but entry was being monitored and usage staggered to ensure social distancing. Councils with golf courses noted that they would be monitoring usage going forward to assess whether it was viable for them to remain open.
- 5. Sports grounds these would be relatively straightforward to reopen, though their condition would be an issue as many mowing and maintenance activities had been paused from March. What would not be able to reopen at the time of interview were the associated club houses and changing facilities. It was often the club houses that generated the income for small clubs and groups to survive so there was some question around their ability to remain solvent at this time.
- 6. Parks and open and public spaces whilst these had generally remained open during the pandemic there has been an exponential rise in usage. This has necessitated council investment in additional security, signage, development of oneway traffic and pedestrian systems and widening cycle lanes. A particular issue was raised by coastal councils who were having to manage very large crowds on their seafront and foreshore areas.
- 7. Theatres and other live performance venues whilst work was underway providing ticket refunds and/or rebookings, as well as arranging programmes and events for the 2021 calendar year there was uncertainty as to the longer-term viability of some venues. Live performance venues will only be able to reopen once all social distancing measures have been lifted and then there is the associated challenge of how to rebuild customer confidence to ensure that audiences return in the numbers required to make venues sustainable.

Longer-term implications of the lockdown on local culture and leisure offer

• It was difficult to judge the impact at the time of the interviews (April to June), and it was felt the situation would become clearer as and when venues could open, as some might be unable to do so due to being economically unviable. However, there was a sense that the pandemic would have wide-ranging implications for CLTS services.

Funding

- Finances were regarded as a key issue both in terms of the revenue generated by CLTS and the financial support required to keep organisations and services viable. Councils will have to review their budgets over the summer and very difficult decisions are likely to be made that could impact on non-statutory services such as CLTS.
- Council finances are in a very fragile situation given the impact of the pandemic coming after 10 years of reductions to their budgets. CLTS provision is non-statutory and there was concern that councils may have to consider closing facilities or stopping outreach work to ensure that they can present a balanced budget. If councils do have to reduce CLTS provision there was a concern that those who are the most vulnerable in communities that would be more adversely affected as they would not be able to access other CLTS provision.

Models of delivery

The social enterprise and other contractual models that were fit for purpose prior to the
pandemic are now felt to be problematic. Councils have indicated that contracts will need
to be renegotiated as agreements in place as at March 2020 are now not fit for purpose.
To do this will require a level of honesty and openness from providers and there is some
concern that their providers will not be able to work in this 'open book' way.

CLTS services (especially libraries, museums and art galleries) have relied on a
volunteer workforce to remain open. These volunteers are often older and it might be
that some volunteers will decide not to return due to concern around COVID-19 infection.
If a large proportion of volunteers decide not to return then this could present a challenge
for councils and trusts who might not have the staffing capacity required to keep facilities
open

Customer behaviour

- It was noted that even for some leisure venues that have opened (golf courses for example) it might be that these will close again soon if visitor numbers do not return.
- Customer confidence and behaviours will play a big part in shaping the longer-term implications on CLTS. Individuals have recently become more able to manage their own health and fitness (for example, through the daily exercise walk) and therefore may decide that a gym membership or attendance at leisure classes is no longer necessary. There was also concern that customers may not return to venues and if they do they might be less ready to purchase refreshments or spend time in or at facilities. Many leisure facilities rely on customer spend and if numbers are reduced then this will have an impact on earned income levels. More generally, there was a realisation that large performance events or festivals will not be taking place this year at least and that the consequences of the lockdown on these events could have an impact over the next two to three years. It might also be that there is an increase in public concern regarding mass-gatherings or gatherings in confined spaces and this will impact on ticket sales and attendance.
- There was a perception that the ways in which culture is experienced and consumed has rapidly altered since lockdown. This was seen to be positive, in that culture was now more readily being accessed and was easier to access but it could set up models of behaviour amongst audiences that would impact on venue attendance going forward.
- CLTS venues have to run at almost full capacity to ensure viability and this may be difficult to achieve in the immediate future. Allied to this is much of the 'profit' is gained through refreshments such as bar and meal receipts and even when venues reopen there was some concern that profits from consumables will not be there as visitors may not wish to eat and drink away from home.
- Many of the cultural and heritage venues are also used for weddings, conferences and other events that provide income. It was thought likely that the hiring of venues will not begin again, in earnest until the spring of 2021. This will impact on budgets for these venues and for councils and other providers.
- For those councils that have a higher education institution (HEI) in their local area, there
 was concern expressed about the shift in nature of the HEI offer post-COVID-19. Many
 universities have already announced a shift to digital lectures and tutorials for the
 2020/21 academic year meaning that students will not be returning to campus sites and
 halls of residence. Students and their families are a large consumer of CLTS and
 contribute significantly to the local economy. Their continued absence could have a
 significant impact on the leisure and culture offer in future.

Partnerships

- The period of austerity has been challenging for councils but there had been real development in highlighting the important role that culture, leisure, tourism and sport has in supporting communities in terms of physical and mental health and wellbeing. Given the likely pressure on council budgets going forward, there was a concern that this linkage would be forgotten.
- Many CLTS providers are engaged and involved in outreach work with schools and groups within the community. There was concern that these outreach programmes of education might be adversely impacted by any reduction in council provided budget.

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 The local cultural and leisure offer is closely linked with other sectors and business, such as food and beverage, retail and transport. There was no certainty as to how associated sectors would fare during the pandemic and there was concern that many bars and restaurants (a key feature of the night-time economy) might not reopen. For those councils that rely on transport companies to bring in visitors to attractions it was noted that some of the large bus and coach companies were reporting trading difficulties and that others had already closed permanently

Wider economic impacts

- The talent and production pipeline has been disrupted by the pandemic and it might also be that the infrastructure required to be in place that supports CLTS will not be there.
- The CLTS offer, especially culture, has helped to encourage 'brand awareness' of a place- but the development of this brand can take a very long time to develop but can be lost relatively quickly. There was concern that the interest, excitement and energy that had been created around cultural and related events and programmes could easily be lost.
- There will likely be an impact on inward investment to places so proposed developments that would attract visitors to a place (for example, the building of a new hotel or the opening of restaurants) may now not happen and this could have a dampening effect on visitor numbers and then on the cultural and tourism offer available.
- It is likely that there will be an economic slowdown following the pandemic and this could impact in terms of i) consumers having less disposable income to engage in leisure, cultural and heritage pursuits and ii) big business no longer sponsoring the arts and culture. England is more heavily dependent on sponsorship than, for example, European countries, and so the impact of this could be considerable.

Opportunities for national action⁵

Access to support

- The support that government and national organisations had provided to support cultural and leisure organisations was recognised and greatly welcomed but there was a call for this support to be extended in the longer-term. Councils noted that specifically, their cultural and heritage sites might be the last to open following easing of the lockdown and that continued financial support would be required to the point at which they were able to re-open on a business as usual model.
- There was concern that some cultural and leisure organisations remained ineligible for government grants and there was a call for the guidance to be amended so that more cultural and heritage organisations could access support.
- The furloughing scheme was welcomed as were the amendments to the programme that allowed artists and creatives to access it. Concern was expressed as to what might happen to staff in the CLTS sector at the point at which the furlough scheme was reduced or stopped completely as it might be that their place of work was still unable to open. It was hoped that there could be a more nuanced approach taken to reducing or amending furlough support to ensure that it took account of the issues and challenges specific to the CLTS sector.

⁵ The interviews undertaken as part of this study took place after the announcement of the Job Retention Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruptions Loan Scheme, but before the Government's announcement of the £1.57 billion support package for culture.

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Clarity around reopening

- Councils asked for clarity around the easing of lockdown measures. Recent announcements by government had caused uncertainty, confusion and a rise in expectations that had been difficult to manage
- Councils asked that there be lead-in time between announcements to change of lockdown procedures and these changes being implemented. It was, on average, taking around three weeks to get facilities ready for reopening (this time being taken to train staff, amend facilities and equipment) so lead-in time was very necessary.

Understanding the local context

- Government needed to be realistic about the state of council budgets and the impact of the pandemic on these. CLTS services are largely non-statutory and there was concern that they would be relatively easy to reduce or pause due to pressure on council budgets. There had to be an understanding by government of the key role that CLTS plays, not only in the economic return at a local level but also on value and positive impact CLTS has on communities, especially the most vulnerable.
- When considering how best to support councils, government needed to take account of local issues and variations. A national formula-based approach might not be the best way to provide support as and where it is most needed and local variation had to be taken into account.

Support for leisure providers

 The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly challenging to the social enterprise leisure provider model. The impact of the pandemic on the social enterprise model has been significant and councils interviewed in this study urged government to continue to provide funding to leisure providers to ensure their viability not only to the point of facility reopening but beyond.

Conclusion

The situation in relation to COVID-19 is changing day-by-day, but it remains important to capture evidence, both in terms of informing effective policy making and providing a record of what will be a significant period for the sector.

This research illuminates the highly difficult environment faced by culture, leisure, tourism and sport providers during COVID-19 and identifies some of the issues facing the sector as the nation moves into a period of recovery. While the support from the Government and sector bodies thus far has been most welcome, culture and leisure services and organisations will continue to experience a very challenging position in both this financial year and the next.

As largely discretionary services, culture and leisure provision has in the past faced its share of funding cuts. Challenging budget positions led to spend on culture and related services being reduced by 45 per cent in the nine years between 2009/10 and 2018/19.⁶

Budgets will be under even greater strain coming out of this crisis. The LGA estimates there is a £7.4 billion gap in council finances as a result of COVID-19.⁷ Since councils are one of the largest funders of culture and leisure, spending an annual £2.2 billion on these services, this raises serious concerns for the sector, and this is reflected in the responses of participants in this research.⁸ Despite this, councils will also wish to consider the following points with regard to their decision making.

Firstly, the explosion of culture, sport and leisure consumption and participation during lockdown has demonstrated that these are among the services that really matter to residents. Their value is far greater than the entertainment they provide: they are essential to people's mental and physical health.

Secondly, councils will have a crucial role to play in delivering economic recovery. Prior to the pandemic, the creative industries were the fastest growing part of the economy, along with tourism. These businesses are integral to our recovery and part of a complex ecosystem which includes the services funded and delivered by councils.

As this research has shown, the impact of COVID-19 on culture, leisure, tourism and sport has been severe and this position is likely to remain challenging in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, this sector has a vital role to play in the nation's recovery. Expenditure on culture and leisure organisations is not a sunk cost; it is an investment in the health and wellbeing of a place and its residents.

⁶ Local authority revenue expenditure and financing figures: <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing</u>

⁷ https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-analysis-covid-19-council-funding-gap-widens-ps74-billion

⁸ Revenue outturn cultural, environmental, regulatory and planning services (RO5) 2018-19

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