

ONLINE PROGRAMME: Governance Now 2026: Purpose & Place

TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKER	SESSION DETAIL
9:15 – 9:30	Conference Welcome – Amanda Smethurst Associate Facilitator – Nic Williams		Online welcome and housekeeping with host
09:30 – 09:45	Welcome	Hilary Carty , Executive Director, Clore Leadership Chris Cook , Mayor of Middlesbrough	Welcome to Middlesbrough and Governance Now 2026
09:45 – 10:10	Opening Keynote	Dawn Airey CBE , Chair, Arts Council England	Perspectives from the new Chair of Arts Council England, the national development agency for creativity and culture in England.
10:15 – 11:00	State of the Nation Keynote	David Bryan, CBE , Chair, London Area Council for Arts Council England Erica Crump , Managing Partner, Bates Wells Charlie Kemp , Head of Creative Place at Tees Valley Combined Authority Dr Suzann McLean MBE , CEO/Artistic Director of Theatre Peckham (Chair) Mark Simpson , Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Teesside University	Perspectives from key sector leaders as they consider the State of the Nation. Topics will include the devolution agenda, impact of polarisation in contemporary politics and challenges for chairs and trustees on hyper-visibility and contested narratives.
11:00 – 11:25	BREAK		
11:25 – 11:30	Online Morning Breakout Introduction (Amanda Smethurst)		
11:30 – 12:30	Breakout Session Under pressure: Examining the Chair/CEO Relationship	Fiona Allan , Strategy & Governance Consultant (Chair) Sita McIntosh , Chief Executive, Go Live Theatre Projects Christopher Stafford , CEO Curve Theatre	Navigating moral and legal complexities in the Chair/CEO relationship, exploring how strong leadership partnerships can manage the pressure while maintaining trust and clarity.

12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH BREAK		
13:30 – 13:45	Sector Challenge Keynote Introduction (Amanda Smethurst)		
TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS	SESSION DETAIL
13:45 – 14:30	Sector Challenge Keynote Making Space: Disability, Leadership and Governance	Abid Hussain , Director, Diversity, Arts Council England (Chair) Andrew Miller MBE , UK Arts Access Champion for All In Sarah Pickthall & Charlene Salter , Co-chairs of Access All Areas Productions Jo Verrent , Director, Unlimited Vici Wreford-Sinnott , Artistic Director, Little Cog	Sector leaders and disability advocates examine how boards can move beyond representation to create genuinely accessible governance, including the realities of work, unpaid participation and the impact of changes to disability support.
14:30 – 14:40	Online Afternoon Breakout Introduction (Amanda Smethurst)		
14:40 – 15:40	Breakout Session Local Government: Change and Strategic Partnership	Gaye Kirby , Head of Culture, Middlesbrough Council Dave Moutrey OBE , Director of Culture and Creative Industries for Manchester City Council Bill Vince , Senior Relationship Manager, Arts Council England	Consider how evolving local government structures are reshaping the cultural landscape and what this means for governance. The session examines how boards can build stronger strategic relationships with local authorities to maximise impact and influence.
15:40 – 15:50	Tea Break		
15:50 – 16:45	Breakout Session Roundtables	Facilitated by Delegates	A series of group discussions exploring key issues in governance today. Topics will be suggested and facilitated by delegates.
16:45 – 17:30	Closing Conversation	Moira Sinclair , Chair, Clore Leadership and Factory International in conversation with ... <i>final speakers to be announced.</i>	Moira Sinclair and key industry leaders from a national and international perspective will discuss the critical governance challenges facing trustees right now.
17:30 – 17:35	Online Host Farewell (Amanda Smethurst)		

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