

Evaluation 2016 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference and planning for 2017

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

151 people attended the LGA's annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference in Leicester on Wednesday 24 – Thursday 25 February 2016, organised in partnership with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association. This report summarises the delegate feedback and suggests a way forward for next year.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- Note the Conference evaluation and offer any other comments.
- Offer any further steer on the format.

Actions

Officers will take forward actions in line with Members' steer.

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Introduction and Background

1. 151 people attended the LGA's annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference in Leicester on Wednesday 24 - Thursday 25 February 2016, organised in partnership with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association. It remains the definitive event for the political and managerial leaders of local culture, tourism and sport.
2. The conference provided delegates and the CTS Board with an unrivalled opportunity to further strengthen the relationship between local government and key partners including Sport England, Arts Council England, Historic England, The National Archives and VisitEngland.
3. The Conference was a platform to promote the CTS Board's priorities and attracted big name speakers, including Stella Duffy, Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE, Jennie Price, Viscountess Penelope Cobham and Sir Laurie Magnus. Workshops covered the latest policy issues and shared leading edge practice on devolution, wellbeing, service transformation and libraries.
4. Key to the event's success was the very successful partnership between the LGA and Leicester City Council, who supported the LGA team from the outset. The City Council hosted an excellent evening event at Curve Theatre and very popular study tours.
5. The shorter format (evening event followed by one day conference compared to 1.5 day conference with evening event) enabled us to reduce the delegate fee from £340 in 2015 (excluding dinner) to £299 in 2016 (including dinner).
6. The conference received very positive delegate feedback. The financial context within which this event operates continues to be very challenging, both for councils and the LGA. Therefore, Lead Members have agreed to broadly retain the shorter 2016 conference format, with some tweaks in response to feedback.

Evaluation of 2016 Conference

7. 48% of delegates completed the evaluation form, which is significantly higher than previous years.
8. Overall, 92% were very or fairly satisfied with the conference. This is significantly higher than last year's satisfaction rating of 82%. 80% of respondents said they would attend the conference again. The study tours scored very high satisfaction ratings, as did Leicester as a host city. The plenary speakers and workshops all scored well. Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE and Stella Duffy scored particularly highly.
9. 131 delegates attended the conference (excluding speakers and exhibitors), 10 higher than last year (121). 95 delegates attended the evening dinner and conference with a further 15 opting to just attend the conference. The conference also attracted more non-LGA Members than previous years.

10. While very positive, the evaluation suggests a number of improvements. In particular, delegates wanted a clearer focus for what is effectively a one day conference. Delegates particularly value the networking opportunities presented by the conference and some wanted more networking time built into the programme. Delegates also wanted more opportunity to ask questions at the plenary panel session.
11. When asked about potential topics for next year, the clear message was to focus on new delivery models and how to sustain culture, tourism and sport in a tough fiscal climate.
- 12. Members are invited to note the conference evaluation and to give any further feedback on the 2016 conference.**

2017 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference

13. The significantly improved satisfaction ratings and higher delegate numbers suggest support for the shorter conference format – an evening networking event, followed by a one day conference programme. This is also in line with other LGA events and puts the conference on a more sustainable footing given the continued budget challenges facing the CTS sector.
14. Hosting the conference in an iconic cultural, historic and sporting destination, with networking and study tours organised around showcasing the host city remains the unique selling point of CTS Conference. Officers will update members on the 2017 venue at the meeting.
15. In response to delegate feedback, Lead Members have agreed the following changes in 2017:
 - 15.1 Agree a focussed theme that runs throughout the plenary and workshop sessions. This will bring greater coherence to the one day format, rather than trying to cover the full range of policy issues in too short a time period. Feedback suggests support for responding to funding challenges and new delivery models.
 - 15.2 Refreshing the Non Departmental Public Body panel format so that it is a 'question time' about the conference theme. This will ensure the session is more interactive with plenty of time for audience participation.
 - 15.3 Maximising the networking opportunities within the shorter format, for example hosting the evening event closer to, or at, the conference hotel and promoting the registration times as a networking opportunity.
- 16. An outline programme is attached at Annex A. Members are invited to note the outline programme and to give any further steer on the 2017 conference format.**
17. We will also continue to pursue all other means to keep costs down and attract as many delegates as possible. In particular, more targeted marketing, an earlier and more targeted approach to potential sponsors, and working with Lead Members and the Political Groups to attract more councillors. We will also provide clear information to delegates about categories of hotels to assist with finding options that suit different budgets.

Next Steps

18. Subject to Members' steer, officers will draft a full draft programme for Lead Members' comments and clearance with a view to confirming as many sessions as possible by the end of July.

Annex A

Programme

LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference and exhibition 2017

Day 1

5.00–6.00	Registration, refreshments and networking
7.00–8.00	Drinks reception
8.00	Dinner

Day 2

8.00	Registration (for new delegates), refreshments and networking
9.00	Three to four walking study tours that showcase the host city's culture, tourism and sport offer
10.30	Refreshments and networking
10.45	Chair's welcome
10.55	Host council welcome
11.05	NDPB Question Time
11.50	Workshop sessions round 1 Three to four workshops covering policy issues and leading edge practice related to the conference theme
12.50	Lunch and networking
1.50	Plenary address 1
2.15	Plenary address
2.40	Workshop sessions round 2
3.40	Plenary address 3
4.05	Conference close