

6 March 2017

## **LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition 2017 and 2018**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

This paper provides a brief overview of the programme for the 2017 Fire Conference and puts forward a proposal for the 2018 Conference.

### **Recommendations**

The Fire Services Management Committee is asked to:

1. **note** the conference programme;
2. **note** the conference publication “An Inclusive Service: the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fire and Rescue Service”; and
3. **approve** the proposals for next year’s conference

### **Action**

Officers to proceed as directed.

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## **LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition 2017 and 2018**

### **Background**

1. The programme for the LGA's Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition is attached at **Appendix A**.

### **Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition - 2017**

2. The Minister for Policing and Fire will be joining us to open the conference. We also have plenary sessions on NJC reform and the Thomas Review, inspection, equality and diversity, procurement and devolution and governance.
3. The workshops will cover a variety of issues including the professional standards body, the on-call duty system, working with health, emergency service collaboration and the review of our sector-led improvement offer.
4. This year we have three silver sponsors for the conference; Infographics, Haagen and the Fire Brigades Union. We have also managed to secure the Institute of Fire Engineers as a gold partner. We will have 19 exhibition stands overall.
5. Officers will provide an update in the meeting.

### **An Inclusive Service: the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fire and Rescue Service**

6. At this year's Fire Conference we will be publishing "An Inclusive Service: the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fire and Rescue Service".
7. The document seeks to provide fire and rescue authorities with support following Brandon Lewis' challenge to the sector on improving the diversity of its firefighter workforce. The document includes case studies from a number of fire and rescue authorities, opinion pieces from representative groups and provides questions to aid discussions at a local level on equality and diversity.
8. Members originally discussed the document at the July 2016 FSMC. The document will be circulated to members separately.

### **Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition - 2018**

9. Following discussions at the FSMC in June 2015, members agreed that the 2018 Fire Conference will again be held in Gateshead at the Hilton:  
<http://lga.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s6947/LGA%20Annual%20Fire%20Conference%20and%20Exhibition%20Venues%20and%20Locations%20for%202017%20and%20Beyond.pdf>.
10. The Fire Conference has, for the last few years, maintained a similar format with a mixture of plenary sessions and workshops on the first day, and plenaries on the second day. Whilst this has worked well and allows for plenty of time for networking,

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we have received feedback that members would like a refresh of the format. We also receive a number of speaking requests from members which we are often not able to accommodate.

11. As outlined in the update paper from the January FSMC meeting we are proposing that some conference sessions be opened up to bids from other organisations. This would allow our member fire and rescue authorities, Police and Crime Commissioners, ambulance trusts, health and social care partners, or groups with a particular interest in an aspect of the fire and rescue service to bid to run a session at the conference.
12. There are a number of different ways that the agenda could be structured to accommodate the new sessions. The LGA's Public Health Conference, which has a number of sessions open for bids, has three blocks of five parallel policy sessions, meaning that there are up to 15 sessions available to bid for. The bidding process for the public health conference has been in place for a number of years, for this year's conference they received 70 bids from organisations to participate in the conference. For the Fire Conference, the number of bids for sessions would partly need to be determined by the response to the bidding process, since this would be a new process, however modelling it on the Public Health Conference would be a possibility.
13. Opening sessions up for bidding would allow us a chance to refresh the conference agenda, involve a wider group of our members directly in the conference delivery and ensure that we could cover a broader variety of topics over the sessions. Lead Members would play a key role in deciding on which bids would be taken forward.
14. If members are happy with the proposal to open a number of sessions up for bidding, the bidding process would need to start shortly after this year's Fire Conference. For the Public Health Conference and the LGA's National Children and Adult Services Conference bidding normally remains open for approximately six months, and closes approximately six months before the start of the conference. If we followed a similar format for the Fire Conference that would mean bidding would shut in September.

### **Implications for Wales <sup>1</sup>**

15. Welsh FRAs would be able to bid for sessions.

### **Financial Implications**

16. There may be increased costs to the LGA due to the higher number of speakers involved.

### **Next steps**

17. Members are asked to:

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<sup>1</sup> The WLGA pays a membership fee to the LGA on behalf of all Welsh councils and we lobby for them on "non-devolved" issues - e.g. DWP work. The WLGA provides "top-slice" for workforce support, but none for "improvement".

17.1. Approve the proposals for next year's conference.