

CTS conference 2019

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board members are invited to:

1. Suggest a possible theme for the annual CTS conference 2019, which will be held in London.
2. Suggest possible venues and locations for walking tours.
3. Suggest names and contacts of possible sponsors for the event.

Recommendations

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board Members are invited to provide a steer on:

1. Attracting more councillors (paragraph 8)
2. Alternative format (paragraph 9)
3. Conference theme (paragraph 12)
4. Keynote speakers (paragraph 13)
5. Walking tour venues (paragraph 14)
6. Possible sponsors (paragraph 16)

Action

Officers will progress as directed.

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CTS Conference 2019

Background

1. 108 people attended the LGA's annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference in Hull on 7/8 March 2017. This is a small increase of two people on 2017.
2. The conference provided delegates and the CTS Board with an unrivalled opportunity to strengthen further the relationship between local government and key partners. It received very positive feedback with 90.9 per cent satisfaction rate, collected in the follow-up survey with a 23.4 per cent response rate. The remaining person was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
3. Despite issues with snow affecting the walking tours, and significant disruption to the trains, no negative feedback was received – the handling of the snow disruption was positively commented on.

Issues

4. Although numbers are comparable to the previous year, they are still down on the 151 in 2016. There has also been a shift away from councillors attending to a higher proportion of officers attending.
5. The later date for 2018, compared to 2017, was chosen to avoid the budget process in councils. Unfortunately, this led to a clash with the LGA Councillors Forum, which was booked later. However, this should not account for the degree of change. The 2019 conference will be held on a different date to avoid any clash.
6. The high satisfaction rate is difficult to square with the low attendance. Although a lower percentage of survey responses was received, the survey in 2016 received a better response rate with 100 per cent satisfaction levels.
7. Freestyle comments to the survey suggest that a more interactive set of workshops and presentations would be desirable.
8. Board members are invited to consider if key elements that would attract councillors are missing, or any alternative explanations for the reduction in attendance.
9. During the last board meeting, an alternate format was discussed and agreed, which would involve holding the walking tours on the afternoon of the first day, with delegates making their own way to the locations and then meeting centrally for the conference dinner. The full conference would then start earlier on the following day, allowing people to be away by early afternoon.

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10. We are in discussions with the City of London to host the event at the Guildhall, and are exploring nearby hotels for suitable accommodation – the area has a number of Premier Inns, as well as other reputable hotels.
11. The Board will have produced a number of reports by 2019, particularly:
 - 11.1. Culture-led regeneration research, although there will also have been roundtables to promote this; and
 - 11.2. The role of councils in supporting skills for the tourism sector.
12. The Board is invited to suggest either a theme for the day, or a key note topic to focus the event around. This could be based on the reports into culture-led regeneration or tourism, or:
 - 12.1. The role of culture, tourism and sport in bringing people together;
 - 12.2. Creating a healthy nation; the role of culture and sport (this will need to avoid duplicating a social prescribing conference planned for Autumn 2018);
 - 12.3. Culture, tourism and sport: home and abroad – featuring selected speakers from universities, embassies and internationally; and
 - 12.4. Urban and rural: the different challenges.
13. The Board is also invited to suggest keynote speakers, including a celebrity speaker. We suggest that Sir Nick Serota and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism are invited to give plenary speeches. The conference will aim for a gender balance for speakers, and the Board is invited to consider this in their suggestions.
14. The Board is also invited to suggest possible locations for walking tours. We suggest that Brent and Waltham Forest Councils are invited to put forward proposals, as the two London Boroughs of Culture and home of the FA. We also suggest the Corporation of London, as probable hosts for the conference, are invited to suggest a tour.

Implications for Wales

15. There are no implications for Wales.

Financial Implications

16. Members' decisions will have an impact on the running costs and surplus from the conference. Members are invited to suggest conference sponsors, including contact details.
17. Despite falling numbers, the CTS conference remains a profit-generating event for the LGA.

Next steps

18. Culture, Tourism and Sport Members are invited to provide a steer on:
 - 18.1. Attracting more councillors (paragraph 8);
 - 18.2. Alternative format (paragraph 9);
 - 18.3. Conference theme (paragraph 11);
 - 18.4. Keynote speakers (paragraph 12);
 - 18.5. Walking tour venues (paragraph 13); and
 - 18.6. Sponsors (paragraph 15).
19. Officers will take forward preparations over the summer in line with members' steer.