

25 January 2019

LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition date and venue for 2020

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper sets out the venue options for the 2020 fire conference and exhibition. It seeks the Committee's views on which venue officers should proceed to book.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the venue and location for the 2020 Fire Conference and Exhibition.

Action

Officers to reflect Members' comments in conference planning.

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Background

1. The LGA annual Fire Conference and Exhibition has attracted an average of 230 delegates and a range of exhibitors and sponsors in recent years. The event is considered to be an important part of the annual fire industry calendar, one of the showcase events organised by the LGA and an important income-generator.
2. Numbers for the 2019 are currently on par with 2018 though numbers of attendees have been decreasing slightly in recent years.

Considerations

3. The FSMC has previously agreed that the following criteria must be taken into consideration when sourcing a venue for this annual conference:
 - 3.1. to only consider venues of a high standard that have in place a fire sprinkler system throughout;
 - 3.2. to only consider venues that can provide both conference rooms and accommodation; and
 - 3.3. to continue to hold the conference over two days (finishing with lunch on the second day).
4. Other factors have emerged during the organisation of past conferences which also need to be taken on board when organising future conferences and these include:
 - 4.1. the need to negotiate a larger number of bedrooms at the chosen conference hotel;
 - 4.2. to have a larger exhibition area to accommodate increased demand from commercial exhibitors (we have 19 exhibition stands at this years' conference); and
 - 4.3. to ensure that all the workshop rooms are of a sufficient size to accommodate delegate numbers.
5. The 2019 conference will be held at the Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel but we need to agree on a suitable location and venue for the 2020 conference so that it can be advertised at this year's conference.

Two options for consideration

6. We have received quotes from the Grand Hotel, Blackpool which was until recently the Hilton Hotel but is now under the management of the Britannia Group and the Hilton Hotel Manchester Deansgate.

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7. Grand Hotel Blackpool

Dates on hold 9 - 11 March 2020 (1st option)

Room	Purpose	Capacity (theatre)
Royal Suite	Main Room and Dinner	600
Queen Suite	Refreshments /lunch and exhibition area	300
Neville	Breakout	80
Mortimer	Breakout	80
Beaufort	Breakout	80
Trafalgar	Breakout	120

The Hotel is situated in a prime location on the seafront overlooking the Irish Sea. The hotel has 274 bedrooms (the majority of which are sea view) and a number that offer wheelchair access.

Near Blackpool Tower, this centrally located hotel provides easy access to excellent transport links. The Grand Hotel Blackpool is 4 miles from Blackpool International Airport and a five-minute drive to Blackpool North railway station.

There is car parking facilities for 300 cars.

8. Hilton Manchester Deansgate

Dates 9 – 11 March 2020 (2nd option)

Room	Purpose	Capacity
Deansgate Suite	Main Room and Dinner	600 (theatre)
Deansgate Foyer	Refreshments and exhibition area	20 exhibition spaces (capacity for 550 standing)
Denasgate Foyer	Lunch	300
Mtg Rm 2,3& 4	Breakout	100
Mtg Rm 8&9	Breakout	100
The Boardroom	Breakout	50
Meeting Rm 1	Breakout	30

The Hotel is located within the Beetham Tower on Deansgate, which is a short distance from Manchester Piccadilly railway station and 23 minutes to Manchester Airport. The hotel is located on the lower 23 floors and the conference facilities are on the 2nd floor

9. Both hotels can provide accommodation but there are a range of hotels in both areas which can cater for all budgets

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10. In order to fulfil the majority of the criteria set out in 3 and 4, the availability of suitable venues is limited. Both these hotels meet the criteria.

11. Price comparison for both venues shown on the table below:

12. Hotel	Day Delegate rate (DDR)	Room Hire	Bedroom rate	Dinner rate 3 course (prices starting from)
Grand Hotel Blackpool	£42	Main room – included in DDR Breakout space - £350 Exhibition space both days - £1,500	£100 per night	£30
Hilton Manchester Deansgate	£52	Main room and exhibition space included in DDR Breakout space £700	£165 per night	£40

*costs shown are including VAT

13. Advantages of the Grand Hotel Blackpool

13.1. Blackpool will be the cheaper option in terms of room hire and the day delegate rate, however we would have to pay for exhibition space as it is a separate room but there may be some scope to negotiate on the price.

13.2. The overnight accommodation for delegates is much cheaper than Manchester. Once you take in to consideration the conference fee of £395 then the additional cost for accommodation has to be a major consideration.

13.3. All of the breakout spaces are a good size ranging from 80 -120 in theatre style.

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13.4. Car parking on site.

13.5. Outdoor space available if we get asked about demonstrations of vehicles, equipment etc.

14. Disadvantages of the Grand Hotel Blackpool

14.1. Travel time from certain parts of the country.

15. Advantages of the Hilton Manchester Deansgate

15.1. Central location in a modern landmark hotel.

15.2. The exhibition space can be located in the Deansgate Foyer which means there is no additional charge for this space.

15.3. Good transport links, which makes it possibly easier to get to than Blackpool.

16. Disadvantages of the Hilton Manchester Deansgate

16.1. The charge for breakout rooms is £700, which is double the cost of breakout space at Blackpool.

16.2. One of the rooms available is fixed and can only accommodate 30 – although there may be some flexibility with the other rooms.

16.3. There is no on site car parking – although there is a NCP car park nearby.

16.4. There would not be external space for demonstrations.

16.5. It is the most expensive of the two venues particularly for overnight accommodation.

16.6. We are on second option but we have been told that we should be able to secure this date if we do wish to proceed.

Recommendations

17. Members are asked to consider the two venue options and agree in principle the date and venue for 2020.