

**Item 9**

## **Evaluation of Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference 2011**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

The annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference took place 3 / 4 March in York. This paper is an evaluation of the event and updates Members on preparations for next year's conference.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the report.

### **Action**

To be taken forward by officers as directed by Members.

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## **Evaluation of Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference 2011**

### **Number of Delegates**

In total 123 delegates attended the conference. Given the budget pressures that councils are under attendance is holding up reasonably well. One challenge is attracting more councillors to the conference. The main reason why fewer are attending is because they have less money to spend on conferences. It is important that we continue to position the conference as the definitive opportunity to access cutting edge learning that will support councillors and senior officers to continue to improve local culture, tourism and sport services in touch economic times.

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total attendance:	123	183	-60

### **Delegate Feedback**

26% of delegates (32) completed the on-line evaluation form.

#### *Overall satisfaction:*

- 70.5% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with the event overall, 25% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or did not know, and three respondents stated that they were dissatisfied.
- The average number of times that respondents had attended the conference previously was two.
- 59% of respondents would attend the conference again. Of those who said no, or they didn't know, content (77%), cost (63%) and location (66.7%) were the main factors which would influence the decision.

#### *Venue and Location:*

- York was deemed a successful place to hold the conference with 100% of respondents indicating that they were either very or fairly satisfied. 92% said they were very satisfied with the Royal York hotel as a location for the conference.
- 63% said they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the conference dinner.

#### *Speakers and programme:*

- Lloyd Grossman was the most popular speaker, with 88% of delegates very or fairly satisfied, with the other speakers attracting satisfaction rates of between 45% and 56%.

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### *Study Tours<sup>1</sup>:*

- The study tours received high satisfaction rates with all but one respondent either very satisfied or fairly satisfied. This reflects early and strong engagement from City of York Council who hosted four excellent study tours,

### *Workshops<sup>2</sup>:*

- The vast majority of respondents were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the workshops. Community Budgets and LEPs were the most highly rated.

### *Conference content, organisation and exhibition:*

- 92.6% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the organisation and running of the event on the day; one delegate was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and one delegate was dissatisfied.
- 59% of respondents were satisfied with the content and structure of the programme for the conference; 26.9% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and only three respondents were dissatisfied.
- 85% of respondents visited the exhibition stands and of these 47% were very or fairly satisfied with the exhibition; 43% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and one delegate was dissatisfied.

### *Summary of delegates' additional comments and suggestions for next year's conference:*

- Although very well organised and interactive the conference programme was a bit repetitive from previous years and there should be more time for discussions/workshops.
- The overall tone of the event could have been more inspirational and more examples of good practice provided.
- Some delegates felt that we tried to cover too many topics.
- Whilst there were many positive comments about the workshops some delegates felt there were too many speakers and not enough discussion time.
- It was suggested that councillors would like a workshop targeted at supporting their role as local political leaders.
- Topics which delegates suggested we should cover at next year's conference were:
  - o Culture led regeneration
  - o Commissioning and service transformation
  - o Localism
  - o Modernising cultural services
  - o Heritage-led regeneration

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that due to the response rate, only a small number of delegates completed the evaluation form for each study tour.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that due to the response rate, only a small number of delegates completed the evaluation form for each workshop.

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- Cultural outcomes
- Promoting the arts

### **Budget**

In response to the economic climate, the events team made every effort to secure the best possible deal for delegates and the LG Group. The team negotiated a considerably lower rate for the venue, negotiated highly competitive deals with suppliers and reduced expenditure on speaker/staff travel and accommodation expenses, audiovisual and sound, study tour costs and dinner.

The table below expresses the net profit margin for the conference over the last two years:

	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>
Surplus	£13, 981	£17,690
Net profit margin	<b>39%</b>	27%

The net profit margin shows that this year's conference generated an improved rate of return for the LG Group despite the tough market. This was largely achieved by significantly reducing the costs to the Group of running the conference.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

The 2012 conference will take place Tuesday 6 March to Thursday 8 March 2012 at Holland House, Cardiff. We were able to announce the details in York and are widely promoting the conference as a "save the date" opportunity.

We need to confirm the programme and speakers as far as possible by mid-July in order to give ourselves enough time to market the event. To this end, it's suggested that Office Holders agree a conference theme and headline speakers at their meeting on 15 June. In the meantime, we would welcome suggestions from Board Members; please contact Rebecca Rossini.

### **Financial Implications**

The costs of the 2012 conference will be met from income generated through delegate fees and sponsorship; it will be imperative to maximise income opportunities and continue to achieve efficiency savings.

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