

## **LGA annual conference and exhibition 2012**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

This report updates office holders on progress to date on the LGA Annual Conference, taking place in Birmingham from 26-28 June 2012. The Leadership Board's views are sought.

### **Recommendation**

This report is primarily for information although it provides the Leadership Board with an opportunity to comment on and contribute to the draft programme.

### **Action**

Senior Events Organiser.

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## **LGA annual conference and exhibition ‘the local government event of the year’**

### **Conference programme structure and other information**

1. The objectives of the LGA annual conference and exhibition are to:
  - 1.1 support the LGA’s lobbying and influencing agenda ;
  - 1.2 help showcase local authority best practice;
  - 1.3. provide an opportunity to profile the LGA’s lobbying, research, publications, and the work of the programme areas;
  - 1.4 support the LGA’s policy work and membership strategy and help to promote local government reputation;
  - 1.5 raise income for the LGA.
  
2. As previously reported, this year’s conference will build on the importance of the event as ‘the Local Government event of the year’. The conference will be built around three key themes of interest to our members and the wider local government community:
  - 2.1 Economy and growth;
  - 2.2 Local political leadership;
  - 2.3 New models of local government.
  
3. Invitations have been extended to the three party leaders and to the Secretary of State for Local Government. In addition to the **Local Government Challenge question time** session, we have five other policy themed plenary sessions. These are as previously agreed and, whilst speakers and session briefs are still to be finalised, will broadly look at the following:
  - 3.1. **Keynote opening session.** The invitation to Governor Christie has been declined and an invitation has gone to the Mayor of London to open the conference, draw together all three themes above in a keynote opening session and highlight the advantages that the imminent Olympic and Paralympic Games will bring to communities across England and Wales.
  - 3.2. **Health and well-being boards – the new crucibles of change?** As the driver for promoting a collaborative approach to commissioning across health and social care, health and well-being boards will bring together local commissioners across the health and social care sector to secure better outcomes for the people in their areas.
  - 3.3. We will be inviting speakers from the Department of Health, the Kings Fund and a lead elected member to take part in this session which will be

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chaired by a journalist.

- 3.4. **Community budgets.** At the LGA's annual conference 2011, the Deputy Prime Minister announced support for areas to develop two 'whole-place' community budgets and two others to do the same at a neighbourhood level.
- 3.5. Six months on from their successful selection, two places who are taking a leading role in shaping the future of public service delivery will share their experiences with delegates. The conference will hear from the council leader in each place, followed by a discussion session with other public service representatives, on what difference community budgets are making to people in their area.
- 3.6. **Driving local growth.** To share and discuss the work of the Local Growth campaign and building on the Town Hall debates. Our Green Paper on Growth will be presented to conference as part of this session. . There are opportunities to pull in some Olympics themes in this session.
- 3.7. Invited speakers will be drawn from the CBI, a Local Enterprise Partnership, a high profile private sector chief executive and will be chaired by Cllr Peter Box CBE.
- 3.8. **Preparing for Police and Crime Commissioners.** This session will provide an opportunity to explore how community safety partnerships have prepared for police and crime commissioners; how panels can provide a robust check and balance to police and crime commissioners and to hear from potential candidates what they will be looking for in their relationships with councils.
- 3.9. Invited speakers will include: Nick Ross, Kit Malthouse and Jacqui Smith.
- 3.10. The winner of the Local Government Challenge will be announced at the closing session of the conference followed by a reception.
- 3.11. The current draft conference programme is attached at **Appendix A**.

**Breakout sessions**

4. Sessions have been put together by a variety of staff from across the LGA – with the annual conference project group overseeing the quality and content to ensure that our priorities, as agreed by the Leadership Board are given prominence.

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5. Invitations have been sent to identified speakers and the sessions details are being finalised with a view to having a completed programme by the end of January 2012.
  - 5.1 In addition to this, Local Authorities and key stakeholders have been provided with opportunities to run breakfast and evening fringe sessions. Hot topic sessions have been held back and suggestions will be reviewed and decided upon at the end of May.
  - 5.2 We will ensure that key campaigns and products are promoted widely at conference through relevant sessions, the exhibition stand and through other innovations.
  - 5.3 The Olympic and Paralympic Games will feature throughout the conference with a stand alone workshop and other opportunities via the exhibition stand, strands of other plenary sessions and fringe sessions.

**Marketing and bookings**

6. Conference fees have again been frozen and are now lower than they were in 2008. We currently have around 200 delegates booked to attend and this is comparable with last year. We will continue to actively target those councils who have not attended the conference for the past few years in order to increase delegate numbers.
7. In addition the 2011-12 Next Generation cohort have been offered a free place at the conference as part of the programme. We are working to both increase the audience and improve the diversity of our audience. Whilst Leaders and Chief Executives remain the core audience, it is clear that there are excellent opportunities to engage other tiers of members and officers with the work of the organisation.
8. Sponsorship is progressing well with almost 50 per cent of the 2011 total already sold. We are working with the exhibition contractor to ensure that the exhibition continues to thrive and it is currently selling well.
9. The conference dedicated website will go live in early January and will include all conference updates and details.

**Innovation and promotion**

10. We will look across the project group at new ways to showcase the value of continued membership to authorities, perhaps through individual policy surgeries, a policy and practice marketplace and/or good use of the exhibition stand for launches and other presentations.

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11. Staff organising sessions have already been asked to think about what key messages will be important before and during the conference to raise the profile of the Association's work with the national and trade press. The press and public affairs team will work closely with the online communications and events teams to deliver these messages through a detailed communications plan drawn up over the coming months.
12. The LGA will again provide live and interactive web coverage of the annual conference through its contract with PRTV to provide LG Intelligence TV. This service provided contact for delegates who were unable to attend the conference and will be invaluable for colleagues across the country giving access to the annual conference speeches, presentations, interviews and downloadable podcasts plus all the documents presented at conference without the need to travel to the event.

**Conclusion and next steps**

13. Work continues to finalise speakers, increase delegate numbers and to identify press and media opportunities around the conference. Comments and suggestions around speakers and innovations are welcomed.

**Financial Implications**

14. The conference continues to generate the largest profit of all the events held across the Association – around £400,000 in 2011 – however, the conference project group is mindful of the need to ensure that delegates attending the conference receive value for money and ensuring that we can provide added value throughout the sessions. We have also limited the payment of speaker fees this year and will continue to identify efficiencies where we can without affecting the nature of this high profile conference.
15. It is important that the conference programme is finalised within the next 6-8 weeks to allow a strong lead time for marketing the event. This will help to ensure that the delegate numbers compare or improve on the 2011 event and that this event retains its status as the key local government conference of the year.