

LGA annual conference and exhibition 2012

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report updates the Leadership Board 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 Board with an opportunity to comment on the programme.

Action

Officers to take forward in line with the Board's comments.

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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:
 - 1.1 to support the LGA’s lobbying and influencing agenda;
 - 1.2 to help showcase local authority best practice;
 - 1.3 to provide an opportunity to profile the LGA’s lobbying, research publications, and the work of the programme areas;
 - 1.4 to support the LGA’s policy work and membership strategy and help to promote local government reputation; and
 - 1.5 to 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 sessions have been put together around three key themes:
 - 2.1 economy and growth;
 - 2.2 local political leadership; and
 - 2.3 new models of local government.
3. Political invitations remain unresolved but will be finalised by the end of May. **Robert Chote**, Chairman of the Office for Budget Responsibility will provide the keynote opening address at this year’s conference.
4. In addition to the **Local Government Challenge** question time session, the winner of which will be announced at the closing session of the conference, other key plenary sessions this year will cover:
 - 4.1 **Health and Social Care** – a keynote address by **Sir David Nicholson**, Chief Executive of the NHS in England.
 - 4.2 **Community budgets** – with **Cllr Sir Richard Leese**, Leader of Manchester City Council, **Cllr Philippa Roe**, Leader of the London Borough of Westminster, the Chief Constable of Essex Police and a GP from Cheshire West and Chester.
 - 4.3 **Driving local growth** – a keynote address by **John Cridland CBE**, Director General of the Childrens Improvement Board (CBI) and

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speeches by Cllr Peter Box and Angela Maxwell, a member of the West Midlands Enterprise Board.

- 4.4 **Police and Crime Commissioners** – a politically balanced panel session to be chaired by **Michael Crick** – speakers to be advised.
5. In addition to this, the conference programme and key activities around the event will be fully linked to the business plan priorities and the LGA campaigns for 2012/13. We have identified a number of sessions related to, and fully reflective of, the LGA campaigns (this list is not exhaustive):

5.1 Securing the future of adult social care

Tuesday workshop – Local leadership, better health – the new vision for public health.

Thursday sub plenary – ‘Are we nearly there yet? The care and support white paper and the LGA’s campaign for meaningful reform’.

5.2 Sustainable funding for local government

Tuesday opening plenary with Robert Chote

Wednesday workshop – ‘Surviving the squeeze: getting to a sustainable settlement for local government’.

5.3 Local economies, local growth

Wednesday plenary – ‘Driving local growth’.

Wednesday evening fringe – ‘Local growth’.

Thursday fringe – ‘Revitalising town centres’.

5.4 Housing the nation

Tuesday workshop – ‘Housing the nation: how to deliver development that communities support’.

Wednesday workshop – ‘Using planning to deliver for – and with – your communities’.

5.5 Keep it REAL: responsive, efficient, accountable local services

Wednesday plenary – ‘Community budgets’.

Wednesday workshop – ‘Constitutional reform’.

Thursday plenary – ‘Police and crime commissioners’.

5.6 Hidden talents

Fringe event currently under construction.

The current draft conference programme is attached at **Annex A**.

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Breakout sessions

6. 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. All sessions have now been agreed and work continues to finalise a handful of outstanding speakers.
7. In addition to this, there is a full programme of breakfast and evening fringes run by local authorities and key stakeholders.
8. We will ensure that key campaigns and products are promoted widely at conference through relevant sessions, the exhibition stand and other innovations.

Marketing and bookings

9. Delegate numbers are currently around 130 up on this time last year, with over 700 delegates already booked to attend. We continue to actively market those councils who have not attended the conference for the past few years to increase delegate numbers and have offered packages to various groups in order to try and increase 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.
10. Sponsorship is at a similar level to the final figures for the 2011 conference with around 15 organisations working in partnership with us. We are working with the exhibition contractor to ensure that the exhibition continues to thrive and it is currently selling well.
11. The conference dedicated website is now live and includes links to the conference blog and twitter accounts.

Innovation and promotion

12. We will look across the project group at ways to showcase the value of continued membership to authorities, through good use of the exhibition stand for launches and other presentations. A list of these is currently being identified with staff across the Association.
13. Staff organising sessions have been asked to identify 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 teams will work closely with the online communications and events teams to deliver these messages through a detailed communications plan.

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14. 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 that are 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

15. Work continues to finalise speakers and logistics; to identify press and media opportunities; and to highlight links with the LGA business plan and campaign priorities around the conference.

Financial Implications

16. The conference continues to generate the largest profit of all the events held across the Association and work continues to identify efficiencies in costs and to increase income through delegate fees and sponsorship.