

LGA annual conference and exhibition 2013

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates office holders on progress to date on the LGA Annual Conference, taking place in Manchester from 2-4 July 2013.

Recommendation

This report is for information and overview.

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

1. Background

- 1.1. The LGA annual conference and exhibition is the Association’s showpiece event attracting over 1100 attendees from Local Government and the Local Government family, central Government, the private and voluntary sector, plus up to another 500 exhibitors, speakers and press. The objectives of the LGA annual conference and exhibition are to:
 - 1.1.1. support the LGA’s lobbying and influencing agenda;
 - 1.1.2. showcase local authority best practice and offer solutions;
 - 1.1.3. provide an opportunity to profile the LGA’s lobbying, research, publications, and the work of the programme areas;
 - 1.1.4. support the LGA’s policy work and membership strategy and help to promote local government reputation;
 - 1.1.5. raise income for the LGA.

2. Conference programme

- 2.1. This year all sessions have been themed around the New Model for Local Government strands and will build on the outcomes from the regional roadshows and deep dive events, continuing the conversation and discussing outstanding questions. The new model papers and launch will provide the core content of our messaging and promotion to members throughout the conference.
 - 2.1.1. Growth
 - 2.1.2. Social care
 - 2.1.3. Financial sustainability of councils
 - 2.1.4. Welfare reform
 - 2.1.5. Independent local government
- 2.2. Following regular overview and updates by the Leadership Board, conference sessions fit well with our business planning priorities and we have secured a strong selection of plenary, parallel plenary and workshop sessions.
- 2.3. Political plenary speakers confirmed include: the Rt Hon the Lord Heseltine; the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP; the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP; the Rt Hon Vince Cable MP; the Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP; the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP.
- 2.4. Other keynote plenary sessions around the above conference themes are:
 - 2.4.1. Rewiring local democracy, opening conference debate following speech by the Chairman of the Association at the end of the General Assembly, around outcomes from new model roadshows with Matthew Taylor, RSA and panel of LA speakers and chaired by Mike Burton, The MJ

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- 2.4.2. A new partnership for growth, the Rt Hon the Lord Heseltine
- 2.4.3. Local Government funding model: reloaded, Professor Tony Travers, Councillor Steve Houghton, Councillor Martin Tett
- 2.4.4. Future funding, future fairness – what next for adult social care? Angela Rippon, Broadcaster and Alzheimer's Society Ambassador; the Rt Hon The Baroness Bakewell, DBE, Dignity in Care Ambassador; Andrew Harrop, General Secretary, Fabian Society
- 2.4.5. Welfare reform – the role of local government in delivering positive change, Lord Freud invited.

The current conference programme is attached at appendix A

3. Conference innovations

- 3.1. We are creating an innovation zone, jointly with Nesta, the UK's innovation foundation, allowing us to:
 - 3.1.1. Showcase a range of social innovations that can help councils to meet their most pressing local challenges.
 - 3.1.2. Share the latest thinking and insights generated through cutting-edge work on Creative Councils, ageing, health, jobs and others.
 - 3.1.3. Offer practical group and one-to-one sessions to help delegates to hone their innovation skills and think about how these can be successfully applied in their councils.
 - 3.1.4. The Innovation Zone is designed to support decision-makers in local authorities who are grappling with the challenges brought about by budget constraints and rising and more complex demands. The Innovation Zone will provide insights, inspiration and practical support to councils that are ready to think in fundamentally different ways and to re-imagine the role of local government
 - 3.1.5. 250 iPads have been made available for delegates to use for the duration of the conference via Capita and a conference app is being created which will update delegates in real time on conference programming and logistics and help delegates to plan their conference experience more effectively.

4. The audience

- 4.1. In 2012, over 300 member authorities sent delegate(s) to the Annual Conference (in the main Leader, Deputy Leader or Group Leaders) and almost 200 Chief Executives were in attendance.
- 4.2. Current delegate numbers are around 650 which are consistent with this time last year.
- 4.3. The conference dedicated website (www.local.gov.uk/annual-conference) holds all of the conference updates and details.

5. Finance, sponsorship, exhibition and launches

- 5.1. The conference continues to generate the largest profit of all the events held across the Association – generating between £425,000 and £600,000 profit.

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Conference fees have been frozen at £495 since last year when it was reduced from the previous year and is currently lower than it was five years ago. 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.

- 5.2. The LGA will have an exhibition stand at the conference – used as a hub for any launches and for demonstrating new products highlighting our services, member benefits, key messages etc. This is staffed by senior staff but will also have a strong communications team presence, and is an excellent opportunity for networking with members and showcasing member benefits.
- 5.3. Work is on-going to achieve targets for exhibition and sponsorship which is proving more challenging this year. We have a main conference sponsor – CCLA – and continue to develop relationships and opportunities.
- 5.4. This year the main conference launch will be the New Model for Local Government and we will build in drop in sessions at the LGA exhibition stand once this has been launched to ‘continue the conversation’ and meet members and experts.

6. Summary

The conference provides an excellent platform for the Association to engage with a large portion of our membership. It supports the Association’s lobbying and influencing agenda through political group meetings and key speeches. It showcases local authority best practice to the wider sector through workshops, fringes, exhibition and case studies. It offers opportunities to profile the Association’s new products, research and publications. It allows us to profile the policy work undertaken by the Association, promote local government reputation and the wide ranging benefits of membership. The event is a high profile opportunity for the lead members and senior staff to engage with the membership and partners.