

Feedback from the Safer Communities Conference 2012

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates the Board on feedback from the annual safer communities conference 2012.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the feedback from this year's annual Safer Communities Conference 2012.

Action

LGA officers to progress as appropriate.

Contact officer: Jane Marcroft
Position: Events Organiser, LGA
Phone no: 020 7664 3080
E-mail: Jane.marcroft@local.gov.uk

Feedback from the annual safer communities conference 2012

Background

1. This year's conference was the fifth of its kind. Sub-titled 'partnership working in a new world' the conference looked at the changing landscape of community safety and in particular how the election of the first Police and Crime Commissioners could affect the way partnerships work.
2. The conference took place on 28 November 2012 and attracted 100 delegates and two exhibitors – PNLD and Saadian. A number of Safer Communities Board members were in attendance.

Conference programme

3. The conference programme was wide reaching and very full and there were sessions on working with Police and Crime Commissioners; working with health and wellbeing boards and clinical commissioning groups; working with probation trusts and there were two sets of workshops focusing on policy updates and practical experiences and improvement. Topics covered included troubled families; anti-social behaviour community trigger pilots, gangs and serious youth violence; domestic homicide reviews; commissioning; using digital engagement to enhance community safety; restructuring community safety local and promoting community safety partnerships to Police and Crime Commissioners and communities.
4. The conference programme also included the launch by the LGA and the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) of the joint national agreement to improve and maintain standards of face-to-face fundraising through voluntary agreements between councils and the PFRA. 'Making the Pledge' has been drawn up as a response to a survey conducted by the LGA that showed that three-quarters of councils were concerned about the impact that the aggressive behaviour of some fundraisers could have on their residents and high streets.

Speakers

5. We had a strong and high calibre line-up of speakers which included Vera Baird QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria; Ian Brady, Deputy Director, Troubled Families Team, Department for Communities and Local Government; Anthony Wills, Chief Executive, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence; and Sally Lewis, Chief Executive, Avon and Somerset Probation Trust amongst other speakers. Cllr Joanna Spicer chaired the conference.

Feedback

6. 94% of those who replied to the delegate survey were either very or fairly satisfied with the event. When asked what delegates had found beneficial about the event the top response cited was the opportunity to learn from what other authorities are doing in this area. This was closely followed by the opportunity to hear about up to date or

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emerging issues relevant to the delegate's work and then the opportunity to hear about issues useful to the delegate's work. By far the majority of delegates who responded felt that the conference had met their needs.

7. Delegates were invited to make comments on individual speakers and Vera Baird QC, Rob Owen, Chief Executive, St Giles Trust, and Nick Keane, Digital Engagement Advisor, National Policing Improvement Agency were singled out by some for praise.

"I had never heard Vera Baird speak before and was very impressed."

"Rob Owen was a fantastic keynote speaker. He was interesting, engaging and spoke so passionately about the work of St Giles Trust that it really made you want to sit up and listen to what he had to say."

"I thought that Nick Keane did a fantastic workshop on digital engagement. He was very well informed, funny, engaging and I really felt like I learnt something."

8. The delegate survey also invited delegates to suggest some possible areas for improvement. A number of comments focused on the workshops - some delegates commented that they would like more time for discussion and questions and for the workshops to be generally more. With four workshops on offer at any one time one delegate commented that he would have liked workshops to be repeated. In drafting up an agenda a careful balance often needs to be struck between ensuring that the programme is sufficiently full and thereby as appealing to as many delegates as possible and logistics and the delegate experience. Another unrelated suggestion focused on the need for such events to look forward at what is coming next rather than looking back.

Positive outcomes

9. Delegate numbers, and therefore income, were considerably up on previous years. Overall the conference made a surplus of over £19,500 (this figure includes the income from the two exhibitors) and this compares very favourably to other one day conferences run across other policy portfolios. Looking closer at the possible reasons for the uptake in delegate numbers the following could all have had a part to play:
 - 9.1 The lead in time for the marketing of the event was considerable and should be repeated, if possible, for all future events going forward.
 - 9.2 The draw of having a Police and Crime Commissioner address conference delegates so newly into her role undoubtedly assisted in generating a few last minute bookings.
 - 9.3 The nature of the event itself was a contributory factor – this is the only cross-cutting event which we organise, and as such it picks up a broad range of community safety topics and thereby enables attendees to get up to speed on a maximum number of topics in one go. Additionally, and as referred to above, the programme was very full and as such had potentially more scope to attract

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as wide an audience as possible and was hopefully perceived to offer the best value for money.

10. The launch of the 'Making the Pledge' was widely picked up by the media and members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and PFRA partners appeared in the Independent and First Magazine and on the Today Programme and Drive Time and over a dozen local and regional papers and radio stations.
11. At the conference delegates maximised their use of twitter to great effect – for example one of our afternoon speakers who arrived half-way through the conference reported that he had been following the conference on twitter as he travelled to the conference.

Conference 2013

12. Members will like to note that next year's annual safer communities conference will take place on 5 December 2013 in London.

Financial Implications

13. Income from our conferences is ploughed back into the organisation in order to keep our subscriptions low and to benefit councils and communities.